

A

T A L E  
n

OF THE

T I M E S.

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BY THE AUTHOR OF *A GOSSIP'S STORY.*

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DEDICATED, BY PERMISSION, TO MRS. CARTER.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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While Hope pictures to us a flattering scene of future bliss,  
let us deny its pencil those colours which are too bright  
to be lasting.—When hearts deserving happiness would  
unite their fortune, Virtue would crown them with an  
unsfading garland of modest, hurtless flowers; but ill-  
judging passion will force the gaudier rose into the wreath,  
whose thorn offends them when its leaves are dropt.

SHERIDAN'S *Rivals.*

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# ADVERTISEMENT



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## ADVERTISEMENT.

SOME recent publications may, perhaps, make it necessary for the Author of the present Work, in order to evade the censure of plagiarism, to state, that she could, if necessary, produce the testimony of several respectable witnesses, to prove the entire plot of the following story, and nearly three parts of the writing, were finished previously to the appearance of the play called "The Stranger" at Drury-lane Theatre; and that she is not conscious of having borrowed one idea from that much-admired performance.

She has seen two works advertised, which she has been informed bear a resemblance to her own plan: "Letters from an Hindoo Rajah;" and "Waldroff; or, the Dangers of Philosophy." As she has never met with either, she cannot tell how far her sentiments may be similar to theirs.

There is a class of writers to whom she owns herself under some obligations, as they not only suggested to her the portrait of her complete villain, but also furnished her with several specious passages, which she has appropriated, unaltered, to the character of Fitzosborne. She could specify the quotations, with the names of the authors; but perhaps their liberality will be better pleased with a general acknowledgment.

## C H A P T E R

And picture world takes heart, and passing cheer  
To joyous and resolute. He has found  
Of sagion and re-sagion. His life effects  
The source of the diligent pasturage less  
By accident was strict rule effects  
Ava blunderer of causes, now they more  
Of knowledge and ignorance, bring  
Out boldness, and glibness, bring  
Coward

Mrs. Pandentii Homestudy soon pass  
days to return impulse to the world for the world  
transcendental reception of her teacher, our  
is now truly convinced first principles  
which she originally shewing the transmuted  
had cause of the lesson, may be combining  
as the demonstration of historical subdivision  
or the application of wiley policy lesson, having  
by age induce of some people itself give out  
cause before of absolutely nothing in ex-  
isting as a better mode transposition of means  
strange than those apply five new community  
occupying the globe, save of interests. Con-

~~THE HISTORY OF THE TIMES.~~

whose partialty under some influences, as  
they not only suggest to her the portion  
of her country which she may  
**T A L E**  
as per usual occasions suggests  
which the past ~~and~~ **OF THE** interested  
in the progress of literature. She  
**T I M E S.**

## C H A P. I.

Forth steps the spruce philosopher, and tells  
Of homogeneal, and discordant, springs  
And principles; of causes, how they work  
By necessary laws their sure effects;  
Of action and re-action. He has found  
The source of the disease that nature feels,  
And bids the world take heart, and banish fear.

COWPER.

MRS. PRUDENTIA HOMESPUN again begs  
leave to return thanks to the world for its very  
favourable reception of her lucubrations. She  
is now firmly convinced, that the clamours  
which are circulated against the injustice and  
bad taste of the times, may be considered either  
as the declamations of disappointed ambition,  
or the ebullitions of malevolent spleen, soured  
by the success of some happier rival. She con-  
ceives herself to be particularly fortunate in ex-  
isting at a period more favourable to mental ex-  
ertions than those which have been commonly  
deemed the golden ages of literature. Con-  
templating from her easy chair the vast extent  
of

## 6 A TALE OF THE TIMES.

of modern discoveries, not only in the sciences, but in morals and government, and extending her meditations from reflection on what her learned co-adjutors have done, to speculation on what they propose doing, she is compelled to acknowledge, that the close of the eighteenth century claims distinguished pre-eminence for those indubitable marks of genius, originality in enterprise, and boldness of invention over the colder eras of Pericles, Augustus, and the Medicis. Nay, she will go so far as to affirm, that the labours of the "New Philosophy" will be remembered by their effects, when the theories of all former schools shall be forgotten.

It must be very gratifying to a retired old woman, to consider that her productions may fail down this swelling stream of fame with those of her immortal contemporaries. She confesses that her ideas differ in some respects from theirs; but as every one professes the same end, namely, the improvement of the universe, she rejoices that she is permitted, by the liberality of the times, to disseminate her own peculiar sentiments. If she be of opinion, that Morality appeared to better advantage when she was contented to be the handmaid of Piety, than since she has set up for an independent character; if she be convinced, that the abilities and attainments of man are in this life so limited, that he will never be able to "wield these elements," to endow a machine with intellectual powers, or to array himself with a self-invested immortality; if she be persuaded, that the filial and conjugal ties are no remnants of feudal barbarism, but happy institutions, calculated to promote domestic peace; if she has been taught, that

that religion is more than sentiment, and female virtue something stronger than exterior decou-  
rse; if she shudder at the eloquence which extenuates impiety, terms seduction an amiable frailty, and gaming an elegant amusement con-  
demned by the insane morality of the law;  
surely she may hope for that celebrity which a bold opposition to received opinions generally ensues. Nay, should she even prefer the Gothic ruff and pinner, as better adapted to British wives and mothers than the loose drapery of Grecian Bacchanals, or the more offensive appearance of uncivilised savages, though recommended by the sanction of Parishion enthu-  
siasts, when, with more than Pagan infatua-  
tion or cannibal insensibility, they meet to commemorate in their festive dances—not the triumphs of their Gods, nor the death of their enemies—but the murder of their parents, their husbands, and their children; may she not plead a close attention to the costume of manners, and reproach the sensual copyists of a Cleopatra or an Aspasia with want of energy, who adopt all the characteristics of the archetypal, of which they exhibit a degrading mo-  
del?

Her intention in resuming the pen is to enforce her opinions by argument, and to illustrate them by example; and she reveals those intentions thus early, that the lover of the wonderful, and the admirer of the horrific, may not complain of having been cheated into the perusal of a performance that has not only a plan for its conduct, but also a moral tendency in its design. Mrs. Prudentia intends to lead her readers through no other labyrinth than the wiles

wiles of systematic depravity, nor to present any object more soul-harrowing than a deceived and entangled, but ultimately penitent heart.

While she confesses that the ground-work of her story has a remote analogy to some well-known facts, she strongly reprobates the idea of personality. The incidents are all her own, and it is only in one portrait that she has attempted to sketch a likeness from nature. She assures the censorious, that, even in that portrait, she has so adjusted the drapery and varied the colours, that it will be impossible for the most curious eye to discover who sat for the outline.

Though regardless whether the fashionable instructors of the day record her as one of their kindred spirits, or condemn her for being a servile admirer of prescribed forms and reprobated restrictions, there is a numerous class of readers, whose favour Mrs. Prudentia is anxiously solicitous to obtain—the truly liberal, and the sincerely good. With candour to forgive small faults, they unite discernment to discover good intentions, and courage to defend the cause of principle against the sarcasms of wit, and the cool contempt of piqued infidelity. To such readers, and such critics, she submits the following pages; and as a proper representative of the illustrious order, she intreats the insertion of

MRS. CARTER.

to accept her public thanks for the invaluable honour of her approbation of the Writer's former efforts, and her permission to inscribe these pages with her respected name. If the present attempt should appear favourable to the cause of

of morality and religion, she humbly hopes, that the lenity inseparable from superior talents will pardon those errors in the composition, which an accurate taste must discover and disapprove.

The fairest ancestry on earth,  
Without desert, is poor;

And every deed of lofty worth  
Is but a claim for more.

SIR ELLIOT OF THE BOWER.

SOME reasons, which are not necessary to be developed in the following pages, made me wish to take a little excursion from Danbury in the course of last autumn. A generous public having supplied the means, I hired a one-horse chaise, and taking with me my whole family, consisting of my maid Betty and my favourite old tabby cat, set out for Brighton. I there heard a narrative which made a very deep impression upon my mind; and, as the communicativeness of my disposition will not allow me to conceal any thing which I imagine capable of conveying instruction, or even innocent amusement, to that worthy set of beings, whom, in common with my sister authors, I term candid readers, I have determined to prefer publishing the History of the Countess of Monteith to a particular description of my own travels. To this resolution I may, perhaps, have been influenced by a culpable degree of modesty. The

public, no doubt, are very anxious to know how many miles a day Betty and I journeyed; at what inns we stopped, and what we had for supper. Could not a florid description beset some sprigs of same on the chalky cliffs of Dunstable? Might not the horrors of Woburn fangs be rendered more gloomy by a convenient whirlwind, hurrying into the air the arid soil? Is there no old decayed manor house, where I could call forth the "sheeted dead to squeak and gibber;" or, supposing we were benighted on Finchley common, could either Rhodian or Carpathian Alps fix a more appropriate station for the haunts of a banditti? Though in a former publication I have unwarily announced my age and order, Betty, for aught the world knows, may be young and beautiful; nay, she may be an orphan foundling, the heiress of some distinguished family; and I may, if I choose, after a long series of adventures, unite her in the hymeneal bond with some all-accomplished youth, who had previously rescued us from the robbers after a most bloody engagement. I begin to suspect that I have chosen the less promising, or rather the less lucrative plan; but I entreat my readers to believe, that it is not because I want powers for the terrific and the romantic, that I continue to pursue the moral and the probable. Something must be allowed to my desire of supporting that character of firmness ascribed to my sisterhood, and which, though it simply consists in choosing to have our own way, the wits are apt to call pertinacity. I will also candidly own, that, since the superior station in this walk is already occupied by real genius, I have too much prudence to enter into a competition, where I shall be

be sure to meet with a descent, and too much pride to enlist among a herd of servile imitators, who mistake confusion for description, and fancy that what is horribly impossible, must be interesting and grand! But, as my days of dotage are not far distant, if lady Monteith should be unfortunate in her appeal for attention, I and Betty may appear upon the scene; even my cat too may be introduced in an episode. I have seen a subject equally unpromising worked up to an astonishing effect, and really admired by readers who had been some years out of the nursery.—But, instead of terrifying the world with a denunciation of what I may do, let me hasten to fulfil my present promise.

IT is now more than ten years since Powerscourt House exhibited a scene of festivity and hospitality unrivalled in modern times, and which might serve to recal to the mind of the spectator the splendid sojourn of Kenilworth, where the lady of the lake welcomed the approach of majesty, and the cruel dissolute earl of Leicester sought to divert general attention from his vices by a captivating display of elegance and amusement. The motives of the venerable baronet who inhabited Powerscourt were widely different from those of the haughty favourite of Elizabeth. His wife was too insensible to scatrenure; his heart never panted for court-favour; and the praise of magnificence or refined taste presented no attractions to his unobtrusive and benevolent mind. He called all the country together, and strove to make them very happy, because he was very happy himself; and the occasion of this exuberant joy was the union of his only daughter and heiress, Geraldine Powerscourt, with James

earl of Monteith, a young Nobleman who had just attained complete majority, and acceded to all the splendid titles and fortune of the house of Macdonald.

Beside all the beauty and fashion of North Wales, these distinguished nuptials were honoured by the presence of two deities, generally supposed to be absolutely inimical to each other. Cupid and Plutus, forgetting ancient enmity, agreed jointly to light the Hymeneal torch. It was impossible to suppose a union contracted under a more perfect coincidence of harmonious equality. The families on both sides might be said to lose themselves in the clouds; for their claims to pre-eminence, advancing far beyond the limit of authentic history, soared into regions which no prudent antiquary would dare to explore. The lineal honours of these illustrious families rested upon a surer basis than mere oral tradition. Sir William Powerscourt could point out the spot of ground where his Ordovician ancestor harangued his vassals before he mounted his scybe-armed car, and led them to join the British forces assembled at Caradoc: and an aunt of lord Monteith's preserved the beak of the galley, which conveyed Donald king of the Isles from Ila, when he paid a visit of ceremony to his contemporary Fergus, some hundred years prior to the invasion of the Romans. It is true, that some incredulous critics, whom nothing can convince, doubted whether the feudal customs, with which Sir William embellished his narrative, existed at that remote period; and I have heard a whisper, that the venerable relic which lady Madelina so carefully preserved was nothing more than the remains of a great gilded dragon, originally suspended over

over a Chinese temple belonging to her ladyship's maternal great-grandfather, though so happily executed, that, like Hamlet's cloud, you might say it was equally like a "camel, or an ouzel, or a whale."

But though these vestiges of remote superiority might rather excite the doubts than fix the conviction of the observer of costume, the Macdonalds and Powrscourts preferred indubitable claims to the honours of antiquity,—extensive influence and ample possessions. It sometimes happens that close attention to adventitious or fantastic appendages induces us to overlook inherent permanent qualities. Lady Madeline's zeal for the dignity of her family was so warmly exercised in the defence of old Donald's galley, that she had no leisure to advert to the fearless intrepidity and the generous liberality with which her ancestors defended the rights of their clan, and succoured their oppressed dependants during the period that the house of Stuart sat upon the Scottish throne. "They stoned the glory of the north" till after the restoration, but the reign of Charles the second, so fatal to principle and morality, first contaminated the house of Monteith, and sapped the foundations of its feudal greatness. In the voluptuous court of that dissipated monarch, the then earl forgot the wild shores of Loch Lomond, and the "flowery borders of the ancient Forth;" and abandoning his castle to ruin, and his dependants to despair, glittered a faint satellite in the train of tinsel greatness. His extravagance and profligality were in some degree repaired by the alliance of his successor with the heiress of a rich Blackwell-hall factor; but the archives of the family are rather silent upon

upon that head, and Lady Madelina could never relate a single anecdote explanatory of the event of those disgraceful nuptials. Since that period, the Macdonalds had persevered in the plan of leaving the family estate, clear from incumbrances, to the eldest son. The younger sons either fell in the defence of their country, or starved in some obscure corner, while the daughters had only their high birth to add to the personal qualifications of merit and beauty, advantages not always sufficient to attract the mercenary heart of man. With no other portion Lady Madelina herself bestowed on the fortunate head of the house of Brazer, the inestimable treasure of her hand. He was indeed far advanced into the vale of years, and his title was only simple Sir Simon; but her ladyship preferred him to all the dukes, marquises, and earls, who, according to the indubitable testimony of herself and her maid Peggy, had for more than twenty years unremittingly implored her compassion.

The father of the young earl, whose nuptials with the heiress of Powerscourt have been announced in the beginning of this chapter, fell a victim to the demon of modern honour, about the same time that the pale orgies of dissipation had made a visible inroad in his lady's health. The shock at the dreadful circumstances of his exit hastened the cruel attacks of disease, and she expired a few months after her lord. The noble pair had even found each other's society too vapid to dispel the gloom of one domestic evening; yet his lordship conceived himself obliged to resent the intrusion of a young officer, who entered her ladyship's box at the opera at a time when the earl was of her party. He fell at the first fire, and the countess found

found it impossible to survive him. The scandalous chronicles of the age asserted, that the colonel's appearance was neither unexpected nor unwelcome to any but the east, and that disappointment, and the necessity of seclusion and economical retrenchment, barbed the mortal dart of woe in the bosom of the fair inconsolable. Till I am convinced that jealousy is the only motive which can direct the attention of a husband to his own wife, and that coulbial sorrow wants energy to break the fragile thread of female existence, I shall adhere to my own representation of this catastrophe.

Lord Monteith, following the example of his progenitors, left his estate totally unincumbered to his only son James. His beautiful daughter Arabella found a protectress in the friendship of her aunt, lady Madelina, who adopted her as her own daughter, and publicly declared her resolution, in case she should produce no heir to the house of Frazer, to bequeath to her all the ample possessions with which Sir Simon's tender gratitude had endowed his beloved bride. At the age of seventeen, after having experienced the adulation and the luxury of two London winters, the lovely Arabella set out for her aunt's castle situated in the wilds of Lochaber, now reduced to a state bordering upon second childhood; she had the melancholy prospect of being perfectly immured.

Her brother's plans were more eligible and agreeable. His guardians insisted that in his education he should pursue the routine usually adopted by young men of his elevated rank. He had been entered at one of our public schools, and thence removed to the University. To counteract a dangerous propensity to the fatal

Fatal allurements of Newmarket, it was proposed immediately after his father's death, that he should make the tour of Europe. He returned when of age, assumed the fortunes of his family, and with them the representation of the ancient peerage of Scotland in the British Parliament, an honour which had been for some time enjoyed by his ancestors.

Since the forms of his election rendered necessary his presence at Holyrood House, he could not avoid paying a visit to the seat of his family. His manners were popular, his countenance strikingly prepossessing, and his person dignified, athletic, and graceful. The Highlanders recognized in the "bonny Lad" the true representative of the house of Macdonald; and the ancient dependants, who, since their Lairds had deserted Monteith, vegetated on the spot which the attachments of their youth rendered eminently dear to them, led their young master the tour of his domain, and pointed out to him its local advantages. They endeavoured to direct his attention to the mazy grandeur of his castle walls, the extensive prospects enjoyed from its turrets, and the faded magnificence of its mouldering furniture. They repeatedly assured him that in his grandfather's time Monteith boasted a distinguished preference over the abode of any other Highland chieftain. The young Nobleman was not passionately attached to ruins; the stormy winds, howling through the long galleries, disturbed his repose, and he wished for no nearer acquaintance with the genius of the tempest. He bestowed with a liberal hand such relief as would afford poverty a temporary aid; but, without exerting sufficient patience to investigate the cause of the calamity, or sufficient courage

courage to redress the evils which even a cursory glance discovered, he hastened to Kinloch Castle, to pay his dutiful respects to lady Madelina.

Neither the manners nor the residence of her ladyship were calculated to remove the disgust with which "Scot and Scotland had inspired him." The house was situated on a bare precipice, the foot of which was washed by the stormy sea that separated the main land from the Hebrides. When its amiable mistress removed from the deserted walls of Monteith, she carried with her all her "Household Gods," I mean the venerable inhabitants of the picture gallery, and the screens, chairs, and tapestry hangings, with which the white-armed spinsters of Macdonald had successively decorated their family-seat. Sir Simon, doubtless, felt sincere exultation at this valuable acquisition; he only stipulated that the remains of his progenitors should not yield their places to the new comers. A coalition was therefore formed, and every wall and apartment in the castle was crowded with multiplied garniture. Screen concealed screen, chair supported chair; a stripe of Jacob meeting Esau repaired the disastrous rents too visible in the taking of Troy, and puzzled the Ciceroni who attempted to unravel the confused history; while Frazers and Macdonalds, placed in full opposition, frowned fierce defiance upon each other, regardless of the bond which now united the once rival families, and ungratefully performed the part of eulogist to them all.

On the third day after her nephew's arrival, when she had explained the family exploits to the eleventh century, he unluckily recollect ed a most pressing engagement which called him instantly

instantly to London. The occasion was so urgent, that he could not possibly stay to hear the fate of some collateral branches which were then divided from the parent stock. Lord Monteith threw himself into his post-chaise, and so strongly did the connections of his ancestors rouse his domestic feelings, that he could think of nothing but getting a good husband for his sister, to free from her confinement, till different scenes excited gayer ideas.

### C H A P. III.

In this calm seat he drew the healthful gale,  
The happy monarch of his sylvan train;  
Here, sided by the guardians of his fold,  
He walk'd his rounds, and cheer'd his blest domain;  
His days, the days of unstain'd nature, roll'd.  
Replete with peace and joy, like patriarchs of old.

THOMSON.

**I**N the preceding chapter I introduced my readers to the family of the bride-groom; but I must bestow several on that of the bride.

Sir William Powerscourt's was certainly a most singular character, and in one particular he widely differed from many gentlemen of his rank in society. His strong attachment to the seat of his ancestors was more the result of generous philanthropy than of any lucrative consideration. 'Tis true, he considered Powerscourt-house as circumscribing within its domain all the beauties that fancy ever feigned; but as he rode round his estate, his feelings resembled those

those of a conscientious guardian rather than of a self-accountable owner, and the landlord and master were in his beneficent bosom ever sunk in the milder qualities of the protector and the friend. His hospitable doors were open to indigence; his delicacy was never hurt by the simplicity of rustic manners; and though the indolence of his temper sometimes prevented him from taking an active part in restraining oppression, or introducing merit to its deserved reward, his liberal purse was always ready to remedy the defect. "My good neighbour Jones," said he one day, "I certainly might write to the lord lieutenant, and get that rogue of an adjutant broke, who would not admit that your son David was of a proper size for the militia, though he swore in other substitutes two inches shorter; but perhaps the man has nothing to live upon but his commission, and being very poor is forced to do dirty actions. Here; remember me to David; tell him that I like a lad of spirit; and there are the ten guineas he was disappointed of." A little time afterward, in consequence of some nefarious proceedings being discovered, the adjutant waited upon Sir William to entreat his intercession with lord W. in his behalf. He pleaded long service and the hurry of business in his defence, and hinted at the wants of a large family. "Sir," said Sir William, "I dare say that what you tell me is very true; but as it is not my own affair, I don't like to write to my kinsman or trouble him about it. But as you seem to have puzzled yourself a little in these army matters, I think you had better try some other plan of life. I can put you into a farm, and make you game keeper of one of my manors;

"manors ; and I hope you won't think it an employ beneath you, for I shall always be glad to see you at Powerscourt." The offer was accepted ; and Sir William afterwards owned that, beside two years' rent, he lost a considerable sum with which he had entrusted him, to enable him to set up ; but his benevolent heart never suffered him to wish the deed undone : "for," said he, "though I believe the man was no better than a cheat, his wife appeared to be a very notable woman, and brought up her family very well."

Sir William did not marry till he was much on the wrong side of forty ; and even then that event proceeded from the same principles which governed all his actions. The wife of a neighbouring gentleman delicately hinted, that one of her daughters was deeply in love with him, that death must be the inevitable consequence of his obduracy. The good baronet was thunder-struck ; he had no predilection for marriage, and certainly no preference for the young lady thus obtruded upon his choice. His conscience entirely vindicated him from any wicked design of stealing the fair one's affections ; neither his glass nor his flatterers had ever attributed to him the most distant resemblance to an Adonis, and he wondered much that any body should fall in love with his brown bob and Kevenhuller hat ; but since it was so, (and the lady's mother protested she did not exaggerate,) he never should enjoy any peace of mind, if he could think himself the cause of making a fellow creature miserable (for Sir William could not give entire credit to the dying part of the story). Rather than have such a weight upon his conscience, he would marry.

Lady

Lady Powerscourt, however, very soon after her marriage, discovered that she had made a great mistake, and was incautious enough to disclose the secret to her husband. It was not from the brown bob nor Kevenhuller hat that the god of love took aim when he pierced her tender bosom, nor was the mortal shaft barbed by the virtues which adorned the respectable character to which they were appendages. Like Hudibras's Cupid, he certainly

"—Fix'd his stand  
"Upon a wealthy jointure land."

Powerscourt-house possessed irresistible attractions, and she had heard her papa and mamma frequently assert, that if Sir William would but marry a woman of taste, it might be made one of the sweetest places in all North Wales. She knew that Sir Ralph Morgan's lady spent all the winter at Bath, the spring in London, the summer at her country-seat, and in the autumn took a tour; that she drove four-in-hand, gave balls, kept a groom of the chambers, and a French waiting-maid, had twelve new dresses a-year, and set the fashions for all the country; yet Sir Ralph's estate was not half so large as Sir William's. What heart could resist such invincible attractions? She immediately fell very deeply in love.

I have in a former publication ventured to give my opinion, that the two faces of Hymen are not exact counter parts to each other. The smiling countenance which fronts the long vista leading to his temple, has few traits of similitude to the austere physiognomy which is decried by those who, after they have offered sacrifice,

sacrifice, retire behind his altar. The discussion of preliminaries might have convinced the lady that the nuptial cup contained some drops of an acid quality. To the charms of Powerscourt she had annexed one grand ingredient, which unhappily did not exist, at least not in its supposed magnitude, I mean, the easiness of Sir William's disposition. Though, "gentle as zephyr blowing underneath a violet" upon most occasions, he had upon others a little of the old bachelor's tenacity about him. He would keep lady Powerscourt a coach and six with all his heart, but he did not like ladies driving four in hand. She might have half a dozen English waiting-women if she pleased, and as many Welch ones, but he did not approve of French filles de chambre. He had no objection to her giving balls to the neighbouring young ladies, and she might make them as happy as she could; but he thought that married ladies ought not to be jiggling about themselves: and as to dress, she might be clothed every day in silver brocade; but his wife should never wear feathers and flowers in her head-dress, like a stage-player.

The grand point of dispute, however, was the occupation of the four seasons. He was willing to take her to town for three months, because the country must be rather dull to women in winter, as they could neither shoot nor hunt; and if she were not well, he would accompany her to Bath or any where that would do her service; but to live at Powerscourt only three months, what would all his neighbours say, and how would his tenants go on without him! My lady strove to convince him that their opinions were not worth regarding; but Sir William was firm. He had long considered them

as

as rational creatures, and he could not hastily renounce that opinion; beside, he was fond of farming, and deeply engaged in schemes of agricultural improvement; and if he stayed so little at home, he must either be the dupe of imposition, or renounce those pursuits. Here his obliging consort hinted, that, since he was so engaged in rural pursuits, business allowed him a fair excuse for absence, and she would be willing occasionally to dispense with his attendance. Sir William was not remarkably quick of apprehension; and, certainly, most bridegrooms in his situation would have been inclined to refer the lady's proposal rather to the exuberant desire of gratifying his peculiar inclination, than to any latent wish of being deprived of his society. He saw it quite in that point of view; and though he made no answer at the time, yet a retrospective consideration of the ineitable condescension which prompted her to give up what she had repeatedly declared to be the greatest blessing of her existence, his dear conversation, rather than tear him from scenes to which he was attached, convinced him that he ought to make some sacrifice to toward such self-denying complacency. One journey to Bath was therefore promised, an annual visit to London had been before tacitly agreed to, and I am not certain whether the overflowings of gratitude might not have compelled the good baronet to submit to be whirled about eighty miles a-day along rough roads by way of taking an autumnal tour, had not his lady, instead of rewarding his compliance by a gentle smile, assumed something of a mortified aspect when he announced his design of accompanying her. He was willing to attribute

attribute this sudden change to her desire of having the magnificent plans that she had just formed for the improvement of Powerscourt carried into execution under her own inspection; and this hope reconciled him to schemes which had at first met with some opposition. He had objected to her design of cutting down the long avenue of oaks which led to the house, and converting the ground into a sweeping lawn, dotted with lilacs and laburnums, interspersed with Chinese temples and leaden statues. He was equally averse to the removal of his straight yew hedges; for, though all the world was against him, he conceived them more natural than the sharp angles of that modern embellishment, a serpentine walk. He thought too that the stags horns and cross-bows were as proper internal ornaments as papier-machee decorations; and many a bitter sigh did it cost him, when his lady's mama and sisters joined in protesting, that, unless the dark Gothic windows and hideous tapestry-hangings were removed from the drawing-room, and light sashes and India paper substituted in their stead, they should fall into hysterics every time they went into the room; but his transport at the idea that these proposed alterations had tended to attach his wife to a spot which would be honoured with such indubitable proofs of her taste and genius, determined him to be a passive spectator of every proposed alteration.

It was in the month of September that Sir William was the happiest of men. Two months were allotted to ceremonious visitings, during which the nuptial retinue moved over every mountain, dale, forest, and glen, which the temerity of the coachman pronounced passable

able. Sir William had the gallantry always to accompany his lady; he heard all her wedding paraphernalia universally admired, and his own brown and gold pronounced immensely becoming, while his point ruffles were cried up as the very summit of elegance. Unaccustomed, however, to the duties of the toilet, he grew weary of white gloves and powdered perukes; and recollecting with pleasure that all his visits were paid, he resumed his drab frock and brown bob with singular complacency. He was meditating a quiet ride round his farm, when my lady, entering, interrupted his agreeable reverie by informing him, that she had received a letter from lady Morgan, who was then at Bath, and insisted upon it that they must come there immediately. The most divine actor was just come out, who infinitely transcended Garrick when in the meridian of his powers; beside, all the world was there, and her numerous acquaintance were anxious to be introduced to a lady of whose beauty and accomplishments they heard so much. To her ladyship's intimation that they must set off immediately, Sir William replied, that it certainly was impossible; there were more than 50 workmen employed in embellishing the house and gardens; but the provident forecast of lady Powerscourt had provided an unanswerable refutation of this objection. She had engaged a most capital improver to come down, and find out all the capabilities which the house and local scenery possessed. Sir William might rely implicitly upon the taste and judgment of this gentleman, who had given satisfaction to most of the nobility and gentry in the kingdom, by exercising what might almost be called the magic power of turning every

place into something exactly opposite to what it was before. The family archives intimate that Sir William was more alarmed than delighted at this information; and it is supposed that the journey to Bath would have been deferred till after Mr. Outline had finished Powerscourt, if my lady had not been taken ill with a violent stomach disorder the next morning, for which the physicians could find no remedy but an immediate use of those waters which King Bladud fortunately discovered, to the unspeakable advantage of all tender husbands and indulgent fathers.

## C H A P. IV.

There Affection with a sickly man  
Shews in her face the roses of eighteen;  
Practis'd to lisp, and hang the head aside,  
Faints into airs, and languishes with pride;  
On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe,  
Wrapp'd in a gown, for sickness and for shew.

RAPE OF THE LOCK.

THE speedy abatement of lady Powerscourt's complaint announced the wisdom of the prescription; but she was a long time extremely languid, out of spirits, and too nervous to bear the fatigue of returning home to the "flaky snow" and "warping wind," that were concomitant to the mountains surrounding Powerscourt. In proof that her case required a warmer situation, the very proposal of leaving Bath

Bath brought on a relapse, and the extreme debility of her health would not even suffer her to spurn Sir William just to take a little peep to see how Mr. Outline went on; with his extensive projects. Profound politicians are generally believed to have a real as well as an ostensible reason for their actions; and though their ladyship pleaded that if she did go she might probably expire without having his dear hand to close her eyes, it is suspected, that, like a good wife, she wished to keep him from witnessing scenes which might irritate a more professed stoic. Convinced that Mr. Outline's taste would appear to consummate advantage if no impediments obstructed his designs, she dragged Sir William every night to the rooms or the theatre, places she was absolutely obliged to attend, in order to prevent the low fever which attacked her every evening that she was persuaded to pass at home.

In a little time the penive languor of Lady Powerscourt's countenance, unfortunately mistaken for the gloom of discontent, and the singular manners of her constant attendant, excited general observation; and the report that she was a pretty young creature sacrificed by her mercenary parents to a rich, foolish, jealous, old inamorato, gave an eclat to her character, which neither constant indisposition, nor the most scrupulous attention to the variations of dress would otherwise have excited. Ladies of the first consequence invited her to their whist parties; her box at the play attracted the most elegant beaux. The former found that she lost money with the best grace imaginable, and the latter discovered that she had an infinitude of wit. That merciless complaint

ennui, which all Sir William's long histories and still longer arguments had rather increased than diminished, fled at the first touch of the fascinating wand of public admiration. Some say, that the tyrant only yielded one victim to secure another; 'tis certain, that while lady Powerscourt dressed, talked, laughed, and was considered as in the highest ton, Sir William concluded a long letter to his steward with a complaint, "That he felt exactly like a fish out of water."

Intoxicated by pleasure and adulation, her ladyship anxiously wished to extend her triumphs beyond the narrow bound of a Bath season. The itinerant world, at whose idol shrine she had resolved to sacrifice, had now transferred its scene of empire to London, and she was impatient to shine a peerless star in a new hemisphere; but some difficulties stood in the way. She had seen enough of life to be convinced that Sir William's stiff drapery, formal manners, and obsolete opinions, formed as direct a contrast to the easy accommodating laws of modern etiquette, as the sturdy oak of the forest does to the bending ease of the pliant willow. She had heard observations infinitely to his disadvantage; and though she could collect no more than that he was a bore and a quiz, she was very sure that these cabalistic terms of fashion must import every thing that was horrid and detestable. Since her evil stars had, previous to her entrée in the great world, bound her for life to such a partner, she must make the best of her hard fate, and endeavour to balance the misery of his society during one part of the year against the advantage of spending his money during the remainder.

mainder. Lady Morgan had assured her, that of all places in the world a husband was least wanted at London. The late hours and perpetual routine of engagements left no leisure for domestic conversation; and, she added, Sir Ralph was so entirely of her mind, that he always devoted the time she spent there to the amusements of hunting and shooting grouse.

Having received information that the improvement of Powerscourt had advanced so far as to defy the possibility of their being completed, or indeed comprehended, by any person but the projector, she became very anxious that Sir William should look a little after his estate, and at least be there in time to attend the approaching audit. But the worthy baronet was by this time become very uneasy about the stability of possessions more fragile than the wide domains of which his ancestors had left him unrivalled lord. His good sense taught him the wide dishimilarity between his own manners and those of the gay, fantastic train who constantly hovered round his lady whenever she appeared in public. He was certain that the *monkeys* (for he honoured them with that appellation) would be pert enough to laugh at his way when his back was turned; and he had seen so many strange things in this world, that if he returned to Wales instead of accompanying his lady to town, they might fill her head with stranger notions than somehow or other the poor thing had already acquired. Her present situation rendered contradiction very difficult; but if he should like her behaviour in town no better than he had done at Bath, he resolved, when once his son and heir was safe in the world, to tell her very plainly, that she was welcome to make herself

aid noqu IStain beaq qd v. ffray to ralimis  
herself as happy as she could at Powerscourt,  
but that she never would agree to any more jour-  
nies of pleasure. Solacing himself with this  
scheme of future resistance, he yielded to the  
present torrent; and, assuring her that he had  
no wish to return to Wales without her, they set  
off for Berkeley-square.

I would not recommend the countenances of  
the Powerscourts on their arrival in London, as  
models to a painter who wished to embody the  
fair idea of connubial happiness. Though the  
lady's might derive a few lively traits from the  
hope that she was entering upon a scene of con-  
quest; yet the apprehension that Sir William was  
projecting secret hostilities placed her exactly in  
the situation of a general whose movements are  
carefully watched by a strong army of observa-  
tion which it would be imprudent openly to at-  
tack. Sir William's dislike of the journey in-  
creased every step he took, and he entered Lon-  
don with a firm expectation that the place and  
the people would prove equally disagreeable. In  
sieu of the taste and elegance with which lady  
Powerscourt was every where fascinated, he saw  
nothing but impertinence and frippery. The  
late hours were insufferable to a man who rose at  
six, dined at three, and dismissed his household  
with family prayers at ten. He was shocked at  
the refinement which banished serious discussion  
from polished circles; and he never could fully  
comprehend the duties of laborious idleness, the  
arcana of modern visiting, the vanity of univer-  
sal acquaintance, or those restraints upon the  
emotions of genuine nature which fashion pre-  
scribes and insipidity adopts. Every thing Sir  
William heard and saw had to him an air of the  
marvellous. He could scarcely believe that the

admirer

admirer of vertù, who piqued himself upon his knowledge of Greek and Roman ruins, might be ignorant of the architectural magnificence of the capital of the British empire! He thought the pure honour of a peer or a senator must be satisfied by condescending to admit a professed sharper to be the companion of his convivial hours. He never could reconcile Sunday visits with his notion of a steady well-regulated family; and he absolutely interdicted lady Powerscourt from associating with what was then termed the first circle, when he came to know that some of its fair members occasionally dispensed with the sanctions of female decorum.

This way of thinking was certainly very singular; but Sir William's prejudices in these and a variety of other instances were not to be vanquished by the light artillery of raillery, which was frequently played off against him in public, or by the more formidable battery of slangs, tears, and faintings, by which his gentle lady strove to induce him to speak and look like other people. Even the tender argument, that a man who really loved his wife must adopt all her sentiments, and conform to all her wishes, was ineffectually opposed to the rigid pertinacity with which Sir William defended the principles that he had ever considered to be the out-works of religion and morality. The circumstances which had induced him to put his "free condition into circumspection" did not appear to him to favour the claims of female supremacy, and he entertained the very heterodox notion, that when a lady falls violently in love, the favoured gentleman has a right to expect that she will make an obliging attentive wife, rather more studious of his humour, than devoted to the indulgence of her own. This

This is not the only notion in which the lords of the creation are misled by that vanity of which nature has given them so preponderant share. The delicacy of the female mind may very possibly be attached to the splendid titles, large possessions, or handsome equipages of a gentleman, when the gentleman himself, considered apart from all these appendages, would never strike any body superior to his dairy-maid. Would it not be unjust to charge a Countess with inconsistency, because she neglected her noble Earl, when all the time her heart had been only attracted by the lustre of his coronet? The noble Earl's chagrin entirely proceeds from the delusions of self-flattery, which whispered that his individual self was the all-potent load-stone, when in reality the magnetic influence darted from his elegant villa and liberal settlement; or perhaps an enamelled watch and diamond hoop-ring, might form the insatuating talisman. I hope this explanatory rule will be applied to all matches which proceed from the strong attachment of a "discreet young creature" to a "very good sort of a man a few years older than herself." It might preserve many a respectable bachelor from the vexation of disappointment, and prevent the censorious from fixing the charge of inconsistency upon many a lady's character, who rather deserves admiration for unshaken constancy. But to return from my digression—  
Fashion, who in one of her whimsical moments elevated Lady Powerscourt into a first-rate toast at Bath, capriciously denied her in London the éclat to which she now conceived herself entitled. If the gloss of novelty was past, and the attraction of the ridiculous was lessened by the appearance of fresh eccentricities in newer characters.

She dressed with greater taste, and her repartees possessed superior wit and brilliancy; but the gazer and the listener no longer announced her triumph. My matronly friends assure me, that one prime ingredient of marriage felicity is, that you always have a helpmate at hand, to whom you transfer the burden of faults and misfortunes. Lady Powercourt could find no other reason for her going out of fashion, than that Sir William, not content with his own singularities, had absolutely prohibited her from dashing in a grand style. No entreaties would prevail upon him to let Lord Jehu drive her in his phaeton up the park in a morning, though his ponies were the sweetest little spirited creatures in the world, and the ride would be of infinite service to her health and spirits. Her head was nine inches lower than any body's at the opera, and though most ladies wore fruit and vegetables by way of aigrette, and lady Morgan sported a beautiful bunch of amethyst grapes with a little gold chaf-finch pecking at them, she herself must wear nothing but plain riband and blond. She might not even play for gold; nay, Sir William was so puritanic, and such an enemy to a little harmless mirth, that she was forced to be as cautious in avoiding a double entendre or a witicism upon priesthood, as if she were wife to the Archbishop of Canterbury. What woman of spirit could brook such restrictions? If she must be moped up, better return and rusticate at Powercourt, than sit like Tantalus within reach of the desired enjoyment which she was not permitted to share. She hinted to her husband something like a wish to do so in a moment of moody discontent, occasioned by his peremptory declaration that she

• Would not go to a masquerade, though the ticket  
• was procured, the dress bespoke, and the party  
• formed for the happy occasion. He for once  
• cordially acquiesced in her wishes, by declaring,  
• that it was the very plan he meant to propose.  
• "I am sure, my dear," said he, "your health  
• has been greatly injured by living in this  
• smoky unwholesome place; and the late  
• hours and constant racketing have worn your  
• poor nerves all to pieces. You have quite  
• lost your colour, and are not half so cheerful  
• as you used to be when galloping over the  
• Welsh mountains, but a little good country  
• air will soon set all to rights again; and so  
• take leave of your friends; for, since you  
• wish it, I am determined to set off for Pow-  
• erscourt on Monday morning."

The general tenor of Sir William Powerscourt's character was yielding philanthropy, but he could at times assume a quiet firmness which disconcerted opposition. Her Ladyship must either dispute or faint, and she chose the latter as the most gentlewomanlike style of contradiction. Sir William was very sorry, and very assiduous to restore her; but the reviving fair saw no signs of compunction in his countenance, nor did he, by inquiring after the cause of her disorder, give her an opportunity of pointing out the only means of preventing a relapse. Indeed, he was become rather callous to die-away arguments; and though his native candour spurned suspicion, their frequent recurrence led him to doubt the existence of the stomach spasms whence this disagreeable excursion had originated. I mean by these observations to caution my readers to be very sparing in the use of these *chez-d'oeuvres* of female generalship, because the too

too great frequency of an ambuscade only puts the enemy more constantly upon his guard. Violent hysterics, floods of tears, and every sign of gentle despondency, confirmed Sir William in the conviction that his Lady's life depended upon her removing immediately from a place where she was so dreadfully indisposed; and she found herself on Monday morning on the road to Caernarvonshire, ~~against~~ <sup>despite</sup> the opinion of all the fine ladies of her acquaintance, united to her own, that she was much too weak to bear the journey, and would certainly expire before she got twenty miles out of London.

**C H A P. V.**

With here a fountain, never to be play'd;  
And there a summer-houle, that knows no shade;  
Here Amphitrite sails through myrtle bow'r's;  
There gladiators fight, or die, in flow'r's.

**POET.**

THE traveller who pursues a road with which he is unacquainted always finds unexpected pleasures mingled with unforeseen misfortunes. A bright sunbeam often dissipates the gloom of a dreary country; the inconvenience of a rugged road is frequently counterbalanced by the magnificence of the surrounding scenery; an occasional companion relieves fatigue; and even the mortification of a bad inn and indifferent accommodations generally tends to heighten the relish of future convivial enjoyments.

**The**

The pilgrim who speeds along the road of life generally encounters a similar mixture of pain and pleasure, not merely in the aggregate, but intimately blended in every event. The rose grows so close to the thorn, that you cannot gather it without encountering a painful sensation; while on the other hand our attention is diverted from the minute wound by the exquisite fragrance of the flower. The pains and pleasures of man, like the world he inhabits, partake of the vicissitude of his own character. I beg pardon for these seemingly irrelevant reflections; but the garrulity of old age can seldom resist an opportunity of moralising.

Nothing could be more melancholy than the situation in which I left lady Powerscourt in my last Chapter, except that of some fair damsel in romance, whom a terrible Saracen is carrying away to his enchanted castle. The twentieth mile-stone was passed, yet Atropos, though oft invoked, forbore to extend her mortal shears, when an unexpected source of consolation suddenly presented itself—not in the shape of a knight armed *cap-a-pie* with spear and buckler, nor in the more modern accoutrement of a fine gentleman with a brace of pistols; and, to say the truth, though a rencontre with lord Jehu just at this crisis might be a very popular incident, I am glad that sir William, for whose character I cannot help feeling a degree of regard, was not drawn into any military adventures. I enjoy the idea of his respectable figure, perfectly satisfied with his victory, riding composedly by the side of his chariot, and wondering if he might venture to get into it at the next stage. Lady Powerscourt's consolations were derived from the philosophic temperament of her own mind.

mind. She recollect ed that she should have it in her power to display such a wardrobe as had never before blazed on the astonished inhabitants of Caernarvonshire. That Powerscourt was now converted into a perfect paradise, and she should reign the unrivalled Armida of the enchanting region, every part of which would announce to her directing taste. Prudence stepped in also to the aid of Patience, and whispered that though she had been defeated in a conflict for superiority, yet, if she carefully kept her own secret, Sir William would never betray her, and she had only to say that she was tired of London, which was in reality nearer the truth than she imagined. Perhaps a degree of remaining pique might suggest the resolution that, as she now perfectly understood her husband's temper, it was only studying the art of tormenting instead of the art of cajoling on any future occasion; and then, though she might not be able to triumph, she would at least make good her retreat.

These placable ideas so happily prevailed, that when they stopt at St. Albans for refreshment, her ladyship on alighting offered her hand to the baronet with the best grace in the world, and anticipated his inquiries how she had borne her journey, by declaring that he was quite right in supposing the country air would do her good, for that she already found herself much better. Sir William was equally delighted with the change, and puzzled to guess at the means by which it had been effected. Somebody or something was very much to blame; but for his life he could hardly tell where the fault lay, whether in the contagious atmosphere of London, in his Lady's caprice, or his own suspicions. However, he now found himself invested with plenitude

plenitude of power; and, like a prudent monarch, he began to consider in what way he should exert it; but his generous heart had been so softened by his Lady's concessions, that he positively resolved upon no further exercise of his prerogative, than that Lady Powerscourt should pay her formal visits by herself in future, and that he would never more wear his white and silvered or yellowed arms of heraldry.

Peace and unanimity prevailed during the remainder of the journey. It was night when they entered the old mansion, and the examination of its beauties was deferred till the next morning; but the tranquillity of the good baronet was then put to a severe trial. The saloon was certainly fitted up in the most elegant manner; but the housekeeper removed every idea of comfort by her information that the chimney smoked so violently, that it was absolutely impossible to have a fire; and, consequently, that it must be useless nine months in the year. The aspect of the dining apartment was equally dreary; the prospect indeed was enchanting, but the latches started about an inch from the frames; and the warped doors were unfavourable either to a graceful exit or entrance, as it was only by means of kicking and pushing that any one could either advance or retreat; and as the chimney, the windows, and the doors, were all constructed uniformly, any alteration was dangerous, perhaps impracticable. The ready invention of Lady Powerscourt discovered, that, as these could only be proper for summer apartments, some little snug parlour could be fitted up for general residence; and they proceeded to the library. This was lofty and extensive; but Mr. Outline's taste for decoration seemed to have annihilated

annihilated its primary intentions; for the multitude of busts, models, and statues, left no space for books. Sir William continued his moralising tour through the rest of the state apartments, which might be truly said "to keep the promise to the eye, and break it to the sense," and concluded his journey in the great hall, where, as he sought in vain for the long broken tables and forms which used to administer to the regale-  
ment of his tenants at Christmas and other sea-  
sons of periodical festivity, her Ladyship re-  
minded him, how charmingly it was now appro-  
priated to the purpose of a ball-room or a  
theatre. She directed his attention to a light  
gallery at the upper end designed for an orches-  
tra, and beautifully decorated; but this elegant  
embellishment was not in a state to bear inspec-  
tion, it having broken down with old Morgan the  
blind harper, who had exhibited it in the preceed-  
ing evening just by way of hazard, he said, while  
the housemaids and gardeners were footling it a  
little below for recreations because his Honor  
was coming home again. bebbui f55ql0iq 913 : v7

Sir William left my Lady to construct ways  
and means for supporting the tottering edifice,  
and, with a deep sigh and a secret murmur  
against new-fangled trumpery, proceeded to  
examine the out-door scenes. The taste of Mr.  
Outline for objects had induced him to remove  
several useful edifices to inconvenient situations,  
while he occupied their places with erections of  
no form nor likelihood, which continually drew  
from the impatient baronet the exclamations of  
"What is this for?" and "What does this  
mean?" The stews were all drained, and their  
places occupied by the ruins of a naval amphि-  
itheatre, while the stream that supplied them was  
b51d111us taught

taught to hop from pebble to pebble an diminutive imitation of old Conway's foaming flood, which roared, in proud magnificence, at a little distance. The windmill had given way to a temple dedicated to Aæolus; and the pigeon-house was succeeded by an aviary of foreign birds, none of which, in Sir William's opinion, were so beautiful as the goldfinch, or sung like the nightingale. As walls were unpicturesque, they, and the fruit-trees which they supported, were every where metamorphosed into ha-ha's. A fine grove of oaks, which screened the house from the north winds, was cut down to admit the prospect of a bleak mountain; and the place of the hardy foresters was occupied by the tender magnolio and frail accacia, at least by their remains, for the beautiful exotics had been already killed by the frosts, or broken by vernal storms. In short, to adopt the owner's description of the house and gardens, "The former was very tasty and very inconvenient; and in the latter there was nothing that you wanted, but there were ruins and heathen gods in abundance."

Sir William's disgust did not prevent Lady Powerscourt from exhibiting herself to infinite advantage in the office of Ciceron, and she continued to point out the beauties of the new improvements, till her neighbours had exhausted every topic of adulation, and her own tongue grew-weary of the pleasing tale. It is suggested, that the inconveniences I have enumerated afterwards struck her more forcibly than any one else; and that her reason for hating Powerscourt was, that no human creature could be well or comfortable in such a cold dreary wilderness sort of a place. Nor did her splendid attire afford a more

more permanent satisfaction: in some articles of dress she was anticipated, in others outshone; and none excited astonishment after their first exhibition. Alas! if happiness be not seated in the mind, even the gratification of our wishes will not ensure its possession.

A few months after her Ladyship's return to Powerscourt, my Heroine first saw the light; and though Sir William had rather it had been a boy, he received the little stranger with all the enthusiastic joy of the fondest parental tenderness. He thought the wianing ways of the dear little cherub must communicate that happiness to the maternal bosom, which somehow or other (a favourite expression of Sir William's) it had hitherto failed to experience. But while the exuberance of his own joy was displaying itself in the usual style of overflowing benevolence and hospitality, his Lady was ruminating on the possibility of being at Chester races; and, contrary to the opinion of her matronly friends, she resolved on the hazardous expedient of a too early appearance in public. A severe cold was the immediate consequence; and the neglect of the first maternal duty, joined to inattention to her own safety, was soon observed to have occasioned a total change in her constitution. Years of ill health, confinement, and severe suffering, proved the melancholy forerunner of premature death.

From the account I have already given of lady Powerscourt, the reader will not suppose that patience tempered the bitter cup of woe with its lenient sweets. Her mind was destitute of natural strength, her temper possessed no native gentleness, her education taught her rather

ther to conceal than to subdue the irritability of her disposition; and, being solely confined to the acquirement of a few external accomplishments, no mental treasures were laid up in store against the bitter day of adversity. The loss of health and beauty at five-and-twenty may certainly be considered as a severe deprivation; and when to those twise lamengs and occasionally severe suffering were added, it could only be a composed and elevated mind that could patiently support the severe conflict. Lady Powerscourt's ideas of pleasure had been adjusted to the limited model which fashion and fortune present to their narrow-minded rotaries; what consolations could they provide to mitigate the horrors of a sick chamber, when the soul can only divert the present gloom by consolatory retrospects of its past conduct, or exhilarating anticipations of its future reward?

The passive spirit of interested dependance could scarcely support the wearisome petulance of the unhappy sufferer; and though Sir William's philanthropy and habitual easiness made him exert more forbearance than generally belongs to the character of a husband, his gentleness sometimes proved unequal to the arduous conflict, and he felt a depressing inquietude which even the smiles of his little girl could not constantly divert. Though calamity renders the selfish mind still more callous to the sorrows of others, it stimulates benevolence to increased exertions. Lady Powerscourt was just relieved from one of her severest attacks, when her servant brought her a letter, which, after a slight perusal, she tossed contemptuously upon the table.

"You

" You seem disturbed my dear," said Sir William, who happened to be present.

" No wonder," returned her ladyship; " surely I have troubles enough of my own without being pestered with other people's; but it is like the usual inconsistency of that thoughtless creature's character."

" Whom do you mean?" said the benevolent baronet, whose attention was roused at the idea of somebody being in distress.

" I mean a very imprudent, but a very diligent relation of mine, who flung herself away in marriage with lord Milford's tutor, a little before I became lady Powerscourt; and she is now, as she might have foreseen, starving."

" Poor soul!" said Sir William, reaching the letter; when finding by the perusal that it contained an appeal not only to the humanity but also to the honour of his lady, he fixed his eyes upon her with some degree of resentment, and exclaimed, " How came you to forget the poor woman? Why, you promised to do something for her husband!"

" She interprets general expressions too largely," resumed her ladyship; " I have done her a great many favours, and should have done her many more; but I found out that she was base, ungrateful, and not worthy of my notice."

" I am sorry for it with all my heart," replied Sir William; " she really writes like a sensible woman and a good Christian."

" Most people with whom I happen to disagree, are so in your opinion."

" My dear, I am sorry to hear you disturbed; your side is in pain again I am afraid."

" It

" It was a great deal better ; but this woman's imperfidence brings on all my old complaints."

" No, no, it won't ; only keep yourself quiet ; but pray, as I am quite a stranger to the story, will you tell me what this Mrs. Evans did, to make you so very angry with her ?"

" I told you, Sir William, she fell in love with a nobleman's tutor, and married him contrary to the advice of all her friends. My father was so incensed, that he declared if she starved, he would never take the least notice of her any more. But I was very kind to her, and I sent her some of my cast-off clothes when I married, which, I suppose, encouraged her to the unheard-of impudence which she has been guilty of. Because she had been a sort of humble friend when we were quite girls, she had the effrontery to beg me to introduce her husband to you ; a fellow whose grandfather was nothing but a travelling pedlar. Did you ever know such audacity ?"

Doubtless Sir William would have felt very angry, if one of his own relations had contaminated the blood of Powerscourt by mixing it with the " puddle of a pedlar," and his resentment might have continued, till he discovered that he had it in his power to do the disgraced couple an act of service ; but he thought it very ridiculous that a family of yesterday should in this instance pretend to the same delicacy with one that could be traced through untold centuries. Her ladyship, perceiving that the glow of resentment did not kindle in his countenance so fast as she expected, added by way of

of climax, " And she sent the letter the very  
" day when she knew I intended to receive  
" company ;—only think of endeavouring to  
" occupy my attention at such a time."

" I think," said Sir William emphatically,  
" that poor Mrs. Evans has been very unfortun-  
ate in applying when you were either too  
" much engaged by pleasure or pain to attend  
" her. But a promise is a promise, let people  
" claim it when they will."

Lady Powerscourt's conscience here gave her  
a severe pang, and she confusedly answered, that  
she was sure she never meant to make any en-  
gagement ; she durst swear that she never said  
so ; at least, if she had, she had quite forgot-  
ten it.

" Very likely, very likely," replied the good  
man ; " you never meant what you said, and  
" so forgot all about it. But you see she has  
" remembered it, and perhaps the world may  
" think that it is owing to me that you have  
" not kept your word, at least according to  
" Mrs. Evans's account of the matter ; how-  
ever, I will try to clear up the mistake ; and  
" as she is your friend and relation, they shall  
" not be left destitute."

Sir William here rose and hurried out of the  
room, while lady Powerscourt loudly disclaimed  
the word *relation*, protesting Mrs. Evans could  
not be nearer than a second cousin, which she  
counted nothing at all.

One self-approving hour whole years outweighs  
all life's else; each minute wins us back again,  
each minute's loss is all we have to gain.  
**C H A P. VI.**

## CHAP. VI.

One self-approving hour whole years outweigh  
Of stupid stareurs, and of loud buzzards.

Of stupid scurfs, and of loud huzza's,

The benevolence of Sir William Powerscourt was not confined within the narrow limits of relations and friends. It was not annihilated by the supposition of ingratitude; nor did its delicate sensibility shrink from the contact of human infirmity. It seemed a ray of that beneficence which causes the sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and the rain to fall upon the just and the unjust. Nor was his idea of charity limited to the virtue of beneficence. Combining with his natural placability of temper, it produced the most cordial desire of being at peace with all mankind, and made ready forgiveness almost on step of offence. He mounted his horse, and rode to Llangollen. On the road he meditated not on the faults of lady Powerscourt, for perhaps his imagination was afraid of venturing into such an ample field, but on the speediest means of alleviating the evils which her neglect had caused. Having heard an excellent character of the Evans's from some neighbouring gentlemen, he hastened to the cottage which sheltered modest worth. He found the wife engaged in the humble offices of domestic business, while the husband was rocking a little baby to sleep, and pronouncing his Sunday discourse. However inelegant

gant these occupations might be, Sir William Powerscourt fancied that they both looked like very sensible people, and very good Christians.

The business of introduction was soon adjusted. Poverty had enfeebled but not extinguished the light of lettered science and polished manners which formerly irradiated the Evans's, and benevolence had entirely banished all ceremonious reserve from their respectable guest. He informed Mrs. Evans that he had a little girl as pretty as that which day a-sleep in the cradle, but that her poor widow lady Powerscourt had scarcely enjoyed a day's health since it was born.

At the mention of lady Powerscourt a deep blush suffused Mrs. Evans's face, which, though in reality it proceeded from her anxiety to know the effect of a letter which she had secretly dispatched without her husband's consent, and contrary to his known opinion, Sir William mistook for the glow of resentment, and very much disliking to see any body angry, had attempted a conciliatory explanation of his wife's conduct. His defence indeed amounted to little more than that, when people were much engaged either by pleasure or pain, they were apt only to think of themselves; yet so powerful was his rhetoric, that the burning blushes on Mrs. Evans's cheek were soon quenched by a flood of tears; and though Sir William was not absolutely unacquainted with tears of anger and disdain, he was convinced that these were of a milder quality. Mrs. Evans's grief was accompanied by the liveliest expressions of regret for lady Powerscourt's sufferings, and the most anxious wishes for her recovery. Sir William's eyes shone with kindred sensibility, he drew his chair closer to the fire, pressed her hand with the freedom of long intimacy, and cheerfully partook of the homely fare

fare with which the hospitality of Mr. Evans had covered the little deal table,

He then took occasion to ask the particulars of their situation, and soon found that it was penurious in the extreme. Every resource had been tried, every friend applied to; but resources are not inexhaustible, and even friends do not always answer the calls of indigence with prompt relief. The favour which had been solicited of lady Powerscourt was only her recommendation to a neighbouring clergyman, who allowed his curates the splendid stipend of fifty pounds per annum. This circumstance, unintentionally discovered, drew from Sir William a deep sigh, and the exclamation of " Well, I " could not think that possible!"

The little girl now awoke, and the good baronet, who was become a great connoisseur in nursery transactions, seemed much attracted by its infantine charms. Finding that the difficulty of procuring sponsors had hitherto caused the christening ceremony to be delayed, he offered himself to undertake the office, adding a few words expressive of his sense of its solemn importance; and having presented the mother with what he called his usual offering on such occasions, a bank-note of fifty pounds, he took leave of the enraptured pair with many kind assurances that they should soon hear of him again.

Providence seemed to assist Sir William's generous resolution of making ample provision for oppressed merit. His domestic chaplain, on receiving the presentation to a valuable prebend, with noble moderation vacated the living of Powerscourt, worth near four hundred pounds per annum. The character and abilities of Mr. Evans

Evans seemed to point him out as an eligible successor; but it appeared to be an insuperable difficulty to gain lady Powerscourt's approbation of such a plan. Luckily, however, the lady was not quite inexorable. The humane concern which Mrs. Evans expressed for her illness had been placed in the strongest point of view; and if it had not wrought upon her gratitudes, it at least, by recalling to her memory the obliging companion and the attentive friend of her younger years, persuaded lady Powerscourt to acknowledge, that in her present situation such a neighbour would be a desirable acquisition. Her apprehension of being disgraced by the recognition of her cousin was relieved by the fortunate communications of some morning visitors, who, having heard that Sir William had publicly announced his intention of providing for Mr. Evans, flew to inform my lady that he was the "charmingest and most delightfulest preacher in the world; that Mrs. Evans too, though an excellent manager, was an amiable agreeable creature, quite the gentleman both in manner and appearance." To such aid to evasions elbow

Sir William had purposed ushering in his intended disposal of the living of Powerscourt, by observations on the loss they should sustain by Mr. Jones's removal, and how highly desirable it was to have an agreeable neighbour at the rectory. He intended next to allude to Mr. Evans's reputed skill at back-gammon, and to inquire if his wife was not a very chatty conversable woman; but my lady stopped his exordium in the midst by one of those sweet surprises, in which the reader will perceive she abounded, and begged him as a favour to com-

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ANSWER

pliment her cousins with the presentation,—a request which was granted with equal astonishment and joy.

Those who have been accustomed to dread the censures of their own hearts, and to suppose that an unwarrantable indulgence of the irritable passions must produce self-condemnation, will probably wonder that lady Powerscourt should wish for the society of a person whose presence must administer perpetual reproach to her conscious mind; but her moral creed was formed upon different principles. She thought it as much impossible for a person of fortune to behave ill to an inferior, as for a beauty to be capricious, or a wit satirical. Each of these characters had a privilege to be rude, tyrannical, and censorious; and as their faults required no atonement, every body was bound, upon the smallest change of behaviour on their parts, to lose the remembrance of past storms in ravishing admiration of the present gentle breeze. Though endued herself with that trembling sensibility which bleeds at every pore, she doubted the existence of feeling in the subordinate orders of mankind; and though she had left her friend sinking in all the horrors of want, without stretching forth her hand to support her, she would have thought that friend the most ungrateful being in the world, if she had refused to dedicate her time to the task of endeavouring to alleviate her real or fancied sorrows.

Mrs. Evans certainly could feel, but she could also forgive. In her behaviour to lady Powerscourt she appeared to remember nothing but that she was the friend of her early youth, and the wife of her revered benefactor.

"It is my duty,"

"duty," she used to say to her husband, when he kindly reproved her for devoting so much time to the painful and unwholesome confinement of a sick chamber: "Consider," she continued, "how much we owe to Sir William's bounty, and how much it befits us to try to alleviate those troubles with which Providence thinks fit to prove the worthiest of human hearts." In this opinion Mr. Evans acquiesced, and only cautioned her not to injure her invaluable health.

Ten years successively rolled away without producing any remarkable change at Powerscourt. The Evans's continued to devote their chief attention to the duties which gratitude, sympathy, and pity required. Soothed by their society, enraptured by the attractive sweetness of his enchanting daughter, and sustained by the exalting consciousness of a life of usefulness and rectitude, Sir William endured the hourly vexations by which the increased irritability of lady Powerscourt's temper contrived to cloud every enjoyment in which she could no longer partake. It seemed as if her example was intended as an awful warning to the pride of beauty and the pride of wealth. She lived to be disgusting and dependant, but she did not live to feel and acknowledge that her faults required the righteous chastisement.

Sir William's deportment at her death was marked by that decent propriety which characterised all his actions. He did not affect to be inconsolable, but he treated her memory with becoming respect. He submitted to the inconvenience of the little parlour and the summer apartments, because it would look like unkindness to his poor wife to restore things to their

old state again. From the same motive he kept the temples and statues in good repair, though he either forgot their names or mistook their situations; and though he rather disliked dogs, he permitted an old black spaniel to be his constant companion, because it seemed to be the only thing to which she shewed any attachment. Yet bitter remembrance would sometimes extort from him, in the company of very particular friends, the confession, "that the poor woman had very odd ways, but people who are always ill are apt to be whimsical."

It was the general opinion of the country, that the good baronet would never more engage in a matrimonial connection, and this seemed to be the more extraordinary, as it was known he ardently wished to transmit his fortune and honours to a lineal descendant of his own name. Whether influenced by delicacy arising from past happiness, or corroded by the recollection of past sorrows, it is certain he never appeared perfectly at ease when love or marriage was the topic of conversation; and though remarkable for uniform civility, the words, "fine feeling," and "acute sensibility," when used in their general import, always drew from him an emphatical "*Nonsense!*"

## CHAP.

## A TALE OF THE TIMES.

She was fair beyond your brightest bloom,  
— She was fair beyond your brightest bloom,

(This Envy owns, since now her bloom is fled,) Fair as the forms that, wove in Fancy's loom, Float in light vision round the poet's head.

Whene'er with soft serenity she smil'd, Or caught the orient blush of quick surprise, How sweetly mutable, how brightly wild! The liquid lustre darted from her eyes!

Each look, each motion, wak'd a new-born grace, That o'er her form its transient glory cast: Some lovely wonder soon usurp'd the place, Chas'd by a charm still lovelier than the last.

MASON.

MY readers whom I introduced in the beginning of my second Chapter to the marriage of Geraldine Powerscourt with the earl of Monteith, will perhaps complain of the intervening circumstances which retard my account of the events immediately subsequent to those auspicious nuptials. They will probably blame me for beginning in the middle, and then going back to the first part; but I have not even yet quite unravelled the clue which led to that event, and must entreat their patience a little longer. Nothing is so imposing upon the generality of the world as an air of superior information and self confidence; I shall therefore, instead of acknowledging myself to have been in an error, proceed to state, that this apparent inconsistency is the effect of plan, and sanctioned by authority.

I can.

I can plead the example of many ingenious luminaries, who solely owe their reputation to a skilful generalship in the arrangement of their plans. Some have chosen to make a second volume take precedence of the first; others have objected to the formality of a beginning; and a third set have disdained the pedantry of a conclusion. Several of the wits of the last age wrote pages on their own pre-existent state; and many writers of our times have penned volumes, which, if they have any meaning, tend to prove that it would have been better had they not existed at all. Some suppose the road to fame lies through the labyrinth of inexplicable paradoxes; while others, who publish one book to disprove what they have written in another, seem to think that, in order to advance, it is necessary to move backward like a crab. In vain does Criticism attempt to restrain these excursive flights:—the modern Pegasus is too restive to endure the rein, and too volatile to attend to the lash; and most writers have succeeded, who have attempted to found their reputation on the broad basis of singularity; for what greater proof of originality and spirit can be given than by doing or saying something which surprises or terrifies every body?

But though these huge Leviathans may thus toss and sport as they please in the great deeps of literature, the lesser fry of authors must submit to some precautions, or endure the harder alternative of annihilation. Our morose task-masters not only impose upon us the hard laws of having a beginning, a middle, and an end; but they state the necessity of unity of design, and an attention to costume in age, place, and character. As I purposed, therefore, to treat

of the effects arising from the marriage of lady Monteith, it became necessary for me to hurry into the midst of the scene, and to bring forth Powerscourt-house in "high pomp jubilant;" and like Homer, Virgil, and Milton, to adjust relative circumstances in an episodical manner. In one respect I differ from these high authorities, by making myself the relator; but even here I have an ingenious fiction ready to obviate critical asperity. It is only supposing me the old Nestor of the fable, or the chorus of the scene, and I may tell as many long stories as I please, and moralise whenever I have an inclination, without offending against any of the statutes of Parnassus in that case made and provided. I will now introduce my Heroine upon the stage.

The connection between a lively sensible girl and a fickle petulant parent could be but slender; the concern, therefore, which Geraldine felt for Lady Powerscourt's death was soon overcome. She had long considered Mrs. Evans as more truly fulfilling the maternal character; and the fondness for her judicious, firm, but affectionate reproofs, that filial deference which the eternal whine of her mother's complaining censures failed to inspire. Under the care of an experienced governess and celebrated masters, procured at unsparing expence, she rapidly acquired every female grace and suitable accomplishment; but it was to the instructions of Mrs. Evans, and to the tender friendship of her daughter Lucy, that her mind was indebted for its richest treasures.

At the age of seventeen she appeared an enchanting beauty; polite, sensible, accomplished, affable, and generous; the idol of her father,

the delight of her friends and dependants, the envy of the neighbourhood, and the object to which every man of fortune in the county secretly aspired :

She was indeed the glass  
Wherein the neighbouring youth did dress them-  
selves."

Miss Powerscourt's example would sanction a small absurdity ; and her enchanting manners excited a herd of awkward imitators. They forgot, however, that it was her wit which supported her opinion, and her graceful beauty that gave elegance to the form of a bonnet, or adjusted the drapery of a robe.

Some fastidious observers, who, cold to the fascination of captivating loveliness, contemplate "the human form divine" with the same cautious discrimination with which they would analyse the merits of a picture, pointed out some shades in this fascinating portrait. They observed, that her vivacity at times approached to levity ; that, under the form of easy *nonchalance*, her eye was on the watch for adulation ; and that the perfections which nature had so liberally bestowed lost their most delicate attractions in the consciousness of possession.

To these observations Candout replied, that even levity was pardonable in youth and beauty, when it appeared to be the artless offspring of a happy innocent heart ; that inexperience would apologise for the faults which proceeded from an exuberant flow of animal spirits, a strong desire to please, and a disposition uncommonly prone to the most generous disinterested confidence ; that it was impossible for her to escape the knowledge

of her own perfections, when every tongue was loud in her praise, and there were none to dispute her claim to pre-eminence; and that it was even amiable in her to wish to display those excellencies which seemed ever to communicate delight to others. I have stated the debates which were caused by the appearance and manners of Miss Powerscourt, and shall only observe, that in point of numbers the applauders had it.

Many were the detractors and imitators which the fair Geraldine excited; but one young lady, who was neither her rival nor her copyist, loved her with unaffected tenderness. The character of Lucy Evans was perfectly her own; it was cast in nature's most artless mould, and finished by the unremitting attention of an intelligent mother and an exemplary father. Inferior to her friend in personal charms and expensive accomplishments, she was yet very pretty, very sensible, very amiable, and as well educated as the daughter of a country clergyman need wish to be. She early taught the difference between a young woman whose fortune must arise from the savings of four hundred pounds per annum, and the heiress of twice as many thousands, she never made the indulgences of Miss Powerscourt the model for the regulation of her own enjoyments and desires. She had read much, she had thought more; her leisure for study and reflection was greater than her friend's, and her mind imperceptibly acquired superior energy. Her knowledge of the world was confined to the manor-house and the rectory; at the former she sometimes met mixt characters; her sensibility made her strongly feel their improprieties, and her sincerity generally betrayed those emotions.

The ladies were friends in the strictest sense

of the word; but when I own that there was no other young person within several miles with whom Miss Powerscourt could properly form an intimacy, my readers will probably condemn me for ascribing the term friendship to an intimacy which rather proceed from chance and locality than from taste and selection, and will probably predict that it was very likely to be annihilated in the rude changes of the jostling world. The following pages will discover how far they are right; it shall suffice for me at present to affirm, that, at the time I am treating of, the attachment was mutual and sincere.

While the fair Geraldine bent over the harp, with the grace of a Calliope and the execution of a Cecilia, Lucy sat quietly at her plain work in a corner of the room, and enjoyed the applause which her friend's masterly performance ever excited. But when Miss Powerscourt's skill in music, drawing, embroidery, filigree, and every other fashionable acquirement, had been displayed, Miss Evans could not wholly escape observation, at least if any persons in company were sufficiently liberal to turn their eyes from the dazzling splendor of fortune to the mild lustre of modest independence. Though her observations did not proceed from a mouth exquisitely formed, nor were enforced by eyes of peculiar brilliancy, they bespoke a correct intelligent mind, and were accompanied by an arch naïveté, or an ingenuous earnestness, which seemed at once to develope the speaker's artless amiable mind. Exulting at the attention which her Lucy's remarks obtained, Miss Powerscourt ever delighted to lead the conversation to topics on which she knew her to excel; and when the party was large, modest diffidence was often charmed.

charmed out of its intended silence by the affectionate artifices of the mistress of the feast.

Without attributing too much to the allurements of wealth, it may readily be believed, that Miss Powerscourt's hand was an object of general contention. After having, in the space of two years, refused more unexceptionable offers than the most invincible heroine of modern romance can boast, she was introduced to the Earl of Monteith at Chester race-ball, and at her chaperon's request accepted him for a partner. Their similitude in graceful beauty, age, fortune, and connections, pointed them out to the whole company, as a most suitable match; and a little policy was admitted, that the peerless pair might not be separated the whole evening. The next morning his Lordship appeared early upon the course, where dismounting without once discussing the merits of the race-horses, or attending to the weighing of the drivers, he took his seat in the stand next to Miss Powerscourt, and during the whole morning seemed to forget that he had several thousands depending upon the issue of the course. In the evening he was again at the ball, again requested the hand of his former partner, and, without once spraining his ankle or complaining of insufferable heat, danced till three o'clock the next morning. Every body was now sure that he was captivated, and the whole county were on the tiptoe of expectation.

On the very day of her return to Powerscourt, Geraldine set out in search of her Lucy, and entreated that she would come and spend a little time with her at the manor. It was impossible for Miss Evans to avoid observing, that her friend's account of the ball, the dresses, and the manners

manners of the company, was very much embarrassed, and destitute of its usual vivacity. On entering the dressing-room Geraldine locked the door, and, throwing her arms around her Lucy's neck, told her she had a secret to divulge which was of the greatest importance. On receiving a promise of inviolable secrecy, Miss Powerscourt attempted to explain; but after several ineffectual attempts to begin the discovery, she saw some company coming over the lawn, and, promising her friend to be more explicit at another time, she unlocked the door and hastened to receive her guests.

It was more than a week before Miss Evans could find leisure from her domestic occupations to visit Powerscourt-house, in order that she might receive the sacred trust. She now found her friend's lively spirits still more subdued; she was absent, frequently sighed, played with her mother's picture, which hung suspended by a pearl chain on her bosom, sketched figures upon the table with her netting needle, and, though unusually affectionate in her expressions, seemed less inclined to confide the story of her troubles than at their former interview. Neither Miss Evans's disposition nor education were in the least romantic; she could only perceive that her friend had met with some great vexation, and she was too delicate to endeavour to pierce the veil which concealed those sorrows; she therefore contented herself with secretly wishing the painful anxiety speedily removed.

But, though Miss Evans was thus short-sighted, my readers have probably discovered enough of the disorder to acquit me of introducing extraneous matter, though I should instantly revert to Lord Monteith. On dancing with Miss Powerscourt

scout the first night, he publicly declared that she was the finest girl he had ever seen; the conversation in the stand convinced him that she was uncommonly clever; and at the interview the second evening she appeared with such captivating grace, that he loudly protested she was the most elegant woman in the world; and that Geraldine Powerscourt was almost enough to induce any man to submit to the yoke of marriage. The friends to whom he uttered these rapturous exclamations reported them to their mothers and sisters, who repeated them to their acquaintance; but the rough masculine sentiment, when filtered through the organs of effeminate delicacy, spoke in a much softer and more insinuating tone. All the ladies protested that the Earl of Monteith was deeply enamoured with Miss Powerscourt; that he thought her the divinest creature that ever existed; that he was dying for an opportunity of throwing himself at her feet; and that his whole earthly happiness depended upon her. This high-flown language, repeated by every visitor, certainly vibrated on the ear of the fair Geraldine with a pleasing sound. She considered the absurdity of the expression to be entirely chargeable on the repeater, but that the sentiment was undoubtedly his Lordship's. She only answered by the words "How ridiculous! How infinitely absurd!" but she blushed and smiled while she reproved, and made no effort to change the conversation to a more sensible subject. Every body observed, that she sighed frequently, talked less, and could remember none but plaintive tunes. The lovely pair were therefore certainly mutually smitten; and it was earnestly hoped that Sir William would

would not waywardly attempt to interdict their union.

A month elapsed, yet the enamoured swain had neither flung himself at the feet of his dulcinea, nor taken any other step to secure the prize upon which his whole earthly happiness depended. This delay, though it cost the lady a little chagrin, was yet upon the whole beneficial to his Lordship's cause. She had time to reflect upon all he had said; and all he had looked, at their former interviews; and though her own knowledge of his character was limited to the observation of uncommon elegance of figure and a gentlemanlike address, the whole world (I mean that part of it with which Miss Powerscourt was acquainted) protested that he was a most amiable and accomplished Nobleman. These vague indefinite terms may be compared to the outline which travellers frequently present of newly-discovered countries, leaving space for succeeding adventurers to embellish the chart by placing rivers, bays, and mountains where they suppose they may be found. Miss Powerscourt exercised all her inventive powers to fill up the sketch of Lord Monteith's character. She marshalled all the virtues and agreeable qualities, and placed them in the properest stations. Wit was supported by taste and learning, generosity was circumscribed by prudence, and heroism was tempered by the most melting sensibility. In fine, the portrait was enchanting, but the likeness was ideal; the fair designer however, like Pygmalion, became deeply enamoured with the creature of her own imagination.

newly come from the Indies, and blow  
the world about her, as the east wind doth A.  
**C H A P. VIII.**

O, ten times faster Venus' pigeons fly  
To seal love's bonds new made, than they are wont  
To keep obliged faith unfeited.

O Love, be moderate, allay thy ecstasy:  
In measure rain thy joys, scant this excess:  
I feel too much thy blessing, make it less,  
For fear I scarceit!

SHAKESPEARE.

**L**ORD MONTEITH was quite a Benedict, and had determined not to encumber himself with a wife, unless he found it impossible to be happy without one. He hastened from the rural shade and moping solitude, which, if not the mother, is certainly the nurse of Love. He plunged into the dissipation of London, visited the court, the opera, the pantheon masquerades; but the lovely form of the Cambrian enchantress pursued him to every retreat. Nay, even at the gaming-table, when hundreds were depending upon the odd trick, she rose to his view in all the splendor of her ball-room ornaments; bending her waving plumes, she gently struck him with her magic fan, and, begging him to be attentive to the delightful dance which was just begun, made him lose the game. If my limited observation of the male character may be trusted, the difference of soul in the two sexes is no where more plainly seen than in their manner of encountering vexation. A lady in Lord Monteith's circumstances, upon finding her heart irrecoverably lost, would have

devoted

devoted her time to woods and groves, and, only breathing her passion to some dear confidante, would have found a luxurious indulgence in complaining of her ruthlets stars; but his Lordship, when he discovered that even cards and dice could no longer occupy his mind, ordered post-horses, and in less than forty-eight hours arrived at the seat of his friend Lord W. in Caernarvonshire, to consult on the properest method of making proposals to the lady who had caused such cruel deviation.

It was agreed, that a very gallant address to Miss Powerscourt should be inclosed in a respectful letter to Sir William; and, to give the proceedings more weight, Lord W. offered to be courier. He found the father and daughter tête-à-tête; the latter rose on his announcing particular business; but on his adding, with a significant look, that it concerned Lord Monteith, she seemed rather to loiter in her attempt to leave the room. "Stay, my dear love, if you like it better," said Sir William, "for I have no secrets from you." The permission was very agreeable; she walked to the opposite window, and seemed only occupied in playing with her favourite Italian greyhound, while her father was circumspectly examining the seal of the packet, and decyphering the armorial honours of the Macdonalds.

"Here is a letter too for you, Geraldine," said Sir William. She turned to receive it; but encountering the eyes of Lord W. the liveliest confusion was imprinted on her countenance. She would have given the world to escape the explanation, which, but a moment before, she was impatient to hear. Luckily a servant announced the arrival of Miss Evans, and she hastened

hastened to receive her friend, while Lord W. as he attended her to the door, politely whispered that her triumph was complete, and entreated her to be as merciful as she was invincible.

Sir William had by this time perused his letter, and sunk into a profound reverie, from which he was roused by the eulogium which lord W. pronounced on the rank, talents, fortune, and connexions of his noble friend, the warmth of his attachment, and the uncommon excellencies of Miss Powerscourt.

Though Sir William listened with the most delighted attention to the panegyric on his daughter, he discovered great uneasiness during the description of lord Monteith's passion; and as soon as lord W. had ended his harangue, he expressed his hopes that the account was not quite true. His noble guest took fire at the imputation of exaggeration, and confirmed every thing he had before asserted with violent protestations.

"Then I beg your lordship's pardon," said Sir William; "and I do assure you, that I had not the smallest design of offending; for, I dare say, you never told me more than what you thought was truth; and very possibly lord Monteith may think so too. Young men and women are apt to suppose themselves in love, and I hope it is no more in the present case; for I should be very sorry to have my girl make a worthy gentleman miserable."

Lord W. pleaded that his noble friend was certainly one of the first matches in the kingdom.

"Undoubtedly,"

" Undoubtedly," replied Sir William; and  
" yet, no disparagement to the Macdonalds, the  
" Powerscourts are quite as ancient and re-  
" spectable. But, to tell you the truth, I am  
" not very fond of lords, at least not for sons-  
" in-law. Geraldine will have enough if her  
" husband has not a shilling, and I would rather  
" she should bestow herself upon some worthy  
" man who would keep up my family, than  
" sink my name and fortune in that of any  
" peer in the three kingdoms."

Lord W. observed, that by a suitable arrangement in the marriage-writings the family name might be preserved.

Sir William rather fretted at these expedients.  
" I have told you, my lord," said he, " that I  
" think very well of the Macdonalds; it is an  
" ancient name, and an honourable family; it  
" has given birth to a great many true lovers of  
" their country; but I hope lord Monteith will  
" nor be offended with me, if I say that I pre-  
" fer my own. In short, my lord, there is a  
" young man whom I think of for Geraldine;  
" and a great blessing, let me tell you, she will  
" be to him."

Lord W. recollected a young man of the name of Powerscourt, whose education had been defrayed at Sir William's expence, and who occasionally visited at the manor; but as he was known to be entirely dependent upon his patron's bounty, no one supposed him the destined husband for the heiress of Powerscourt. His lordship's astonishment was so great that he could not help asking, whether the lady assented to this extraordinary disposal of charms which might add honour to a dukedom.

" I have

“ I have not yet told her my plans,” said Sir William; “ she is very young at present, and I would not cut short her happiest days. She is so attached to me, that I am sure it will be almost death for her to leave me; but as she is my only child, I must marry her to keep up my family. I assure your lordship, she is a very sensible girl, and will have no notion about dukedoms, unless other people put it in her head.”

Lord W. asked if the happy youth knew his envied destination.

Sir William did not like to be thus catechised; he, however, answered in the negative. “ I don’t think it right,” said he, “ to have young men made vain. He is a modest good lad now, and will enjoy his fortune better, and know how to do more good with it, for having been without one when he was young. I assure you, my lord, you are the first person to whom I ever mentioned my plan, though I formed it as soon as my wife died, never intending to marry again. It is out of respect to lord Monteith that I mention it, because I would not have him think that I refuse his addresses in an uncivil manner. But had I not better write a few lines to his lordship, as he was so polite as to write to me?”

Lord W. promised to be a faithful reporter of what had passed, and they separated mutually dissatisfied, lord W. conceiving Sir William to be the most extraordinary old quiz he ever conversed with; and Sir William wishing the flashy young men would let his daughter alone, being certain that she was perfectly happy if they would not torment her.

While

While this scene passed in the breakfast-parlour, Geraldine was perusing her letter in the dressing-room, commenting on its passionate but respectful contents, and owning to her dear Lucy that it was impossible to deny lord Monteith's merits. She could now repeat all the adventures of Chester races; her account was lively and interesting, yet sufficiently sentimental to explain to Miss Evans the reason of her absence and her sighs. She waited her father's summons with impatience, and flew to dinner with so light a foot as would scarcely have pressed down

"The gossamer

"That idles in the summer's noon-tide air;"  
but it was observable, that she returned with

"Even sleep, and musing gain,

"Sober, steadfast, and demure."

I need not account in diffuse terms for the change. Sir William had informed her of his absolute rejection of lord Monteith, in a manner which evidently proved that he expected she would be as well satisfied with his conduct, in this particular, as she had been in every preceding instance, it never occurring to Sir William that she could be at all interested in the addresses of a stranger.

Though Miss Powercourt had certainly acted with girlish precipitancy in attaching herself to the idol of her own imagination; and though, with the common philosophy of nineteen, she supposed nothing so irretrievable as a wandering heart, she really was what Sir William esteemed her to be, a very amiable and very

very sensible girl. She not only loved her father's person, but she also venerated his character. The emphasis that he laid on the word *stranger* induced her to reflect on the hazard of bestowing her hand upon a person with whom she was so slightly acquainted; and though she continued to believe that lord Monteith possessed all the real virtues of which she had conjured up the resemblance, yet she thought there would be no impropriety in letting the latent excellencies expand. In fine, she was too respectful as a daughter to establish an open opposition to her father's intentions, and too delicate as a female to think of encouraging an address which wanted the solemn sanction of paternal approbation. If lord Monteith's passion were sincere, it would not be repressed by difficulties; and if it stood the trial, she knew the warmth of Sir William's affection to her too well to fear his final rejection, when he should know that her happiness depended upon his assent.

If my readers think these resolutions too magnanimous to correspond with the character of a young lady accustomed even to that solicitous indulgence which prevents our wishes, who never viewed the world but on its brightest side, and who never saw

"Hard unkindness' alter'd eye

"Mock the tear it forc'd to flows."

let it be remembered, that she had in Mrs. Evans a friend of a superior cast to what most heiresses can ever hope to possess; a friend who, having no sinister views, had no occasion for servility or flattery;—a friend, who to an ex-

altered turn of mind united the courage to enforce unpleasant truths, and generosity to overlook casual errors.

We have seen that gratitude to Sir William reconciled Mrs. Evans to the painful task of attending lady Powerscourt during her long illness. When death terminated what she conceived to be her duty in that particular, she considered the situation of his daughter. Young, amiable, idolised, possessed of superior beauty and uncommon vivacity, by what more noble method could she evince her gratitude to the father, than by shewing the unwary girl the shoals and quick-sands which abound in the voyage of life?

Mrs. Evans's early knowledge of what is called the great world convinced her, that though refinement may interpose its flimsy veil, the unamiable passions prevail in the higher circles as much as in the cottage; and that the pilgrim who wishes to pursue a safe course must unite the serpent with the dove. While, therefore, she strongly recommended to Miss Powerscourt the extirpation, not the concealment, of every ungenerous, violent, and selfish principle, as the happiest means of ensuring internal peace, she taught her to apprehend external danger from the violence and selfishness of others, however concealed by the fair appearance of polished manners, or even by professions of attachment. But, above all, she strongly imprinted on her pupil's mind a veneration for her father's character. She not only pointed out his active benevolence, patient gentleness, and firm integrity, but led her to consider the general propriety of his opinions upon any subject with which he was thoroughly acquainted; and

and though his recluse habits had cast an air of singularity over his natural good sense, yet his plain firm style of thinking was not only better but wiser than that flexible judgment which bends, contracts, or expands, as the world, that is, as caprice determines. Nothing could be more judicious than these instructions. Miss Powerscourt's parts were lively and brilliant, quick in discovering the ridiculous, and powerful in exposing it. Though virtue, benevolence, and fond indulgence, must have obtained the warm affection of her grateful heart, her respect for such a father could only be founded on the persuasion which she had imbibed in her early youth of the natural superiority of his uncultivated understanding.

The consciousness of yielding to a weakness which Mrs. Evans would disapprove had kept her from informing Lucy of the state of her heart prior to lord Monteith's declaration, and the same sentiment forbade her discovering any strong uneasiness at her father's rejection of his addresses. In relating the affair she only observed with a suppressed sigh, that she thought his lordship infinitely the most amiable and deserving of any of her suitors; but since her father disapproved the connexion, she should acquiesce in his decision, and heartily wish the earl happy with some other lady; in which wish, however, it may be questioned whether she did not make a little use of the long bow.

The enamoured earl was not at this time in so quiescent a state. He was quite in a humour for

"Moving accidents by flood and field;"  
Or,

"For hair-breadth 'scapes in th' imminent deadly  
"breach."

One time he resolved to storm the castle and free the lady from durance; at another time decided to stretch his rival in the bloody dust. The probability of the fair one's being offended by the first project soon made him abandon that; and there seemed so much cruelty in killing a man who did not even know that he was an impediment to his happiness, that his lordship's cooler judgment pronounced that the latter would be too sanguinary. After considering all the plans which ancient and modern romance supplies, the old scheme of Jupiter and the shower of gold was preferred. But it was not to Danaë that the Caledonian Jupiter descended in that form; it was to Danaë's waiting maid.

The very evening after this phenomenon had taken place, Miss Powerscourt saw a letter upon her dressing-table, superscribed in characters which she perfectly recollects. The Cambrian Abigail was not an adept in her profession; for on being questioned how it came there, she neither affirmed that she saw a Cupid fly in with it at the window, nor even hinted that it might be conveyed there by fairies, or rise out of the table by the power of enchantment. She neither invoked goblin nor witch, but simply owned that lord Monteith begged her to deliver it, and she thought there could be no harm in complying with the request of such an agreeable gentleman.

"If you do not know your duty to my father,  
"Bridget, I know mine: return it immediately  
"to his lordship; but stay; I think I will add  
"a few words."

Mrs. Bridget blessed her goodness, and began an harangue on his lordship's virtues, which her mistress silenced with a look, and she retired.

The

The opener of Pandora's box was a gentleman. Let the gentlemen therefore behold one of the sex whom they brand with the stigma of curiosity, sitting with a Pandora's box sealed before her, yet forbearing to lift the interdicted lid. She wrote a few lines which expressed her abhorrence of a clandestine correspondence, without intimating perpetual enmity against the correspondent, and, inclosing his lordship's letter, rung her bell, and ordered it to be delivered by the very first opportunity. She refused Mrs. Bridget's attendance that evening, and betook herself to the repose which conscious rectitude and self-possession can alone enjoy.

**C H A P. IX.**

A prudent father,  
By nature charg'd to guide and rule her choice,  
Resigns his daughter to a husband's power,  
Who, with superior dignity, with reason,  
And manly tenderness, will ever love her;  
Not first a kneeling slave, and then a tyrant.

THOMSON.

LORD Monteith and his friend were forced to project fresh measures; for Mrs. Bridget was so unwilling to offend her dear generous young lady, that she refused to appear any more upon the stage, and yet her gratitude to the dear generous young gentleman induced her to consent still to take a part behind the scenes. She suggested that her lady would soon pay a visit

to a neighbouring family; that she would go on horseback, only accompanied by Mr. John the groom; that the road lay through a neighbouring coppice, but that lord W. as well as Sir William had keys of the ridings; and she concluded with observing significantly, that Mr. John was a very well-behaved man, no listener, and too *discreet* to say any thing.

The excursion was undertaken at the appointed time; but the instant Miss Powercourt entered the wood, she saw a gentleman on horseback approaching, whom in another instant she knew to be lord Monteith. Her first intention was to turn back, but she was prevented by John's having dropped the key in the long grass, just as he had locked the gate. Anger was useless, indeed unreasonable; for the poor man was endeavouring to repair his carelessness by looking for it very anxiously. Though she could not but suspect that the *rencontre* was concerted, she had sufficient confidence in her own dignity to overcome her first agitation. Retreat was impossible, and she advanced slowly to the dreaded interview.

On the gentleman's side there was expressed an infinitude of love, admiration and despair, blended with some degree of resentful sensibility at the idea of being compelled privately to solicit a blessing to which he had thought himself entitled publicly to aspire. On the lady's there appeared a just sense of female decorum, and a steady resolution to repel any acrimonious observations on her father's conduct. But the most interesting part of the conversation took place after lord Monteith had explained Sir William's reasons for rejecting his addresses, and asked

asked her if she would accept the lover he designed to propose.

" Assuredly I will not," was her answer. " Should my father ever express such intentions to me, I must be as firm in refusing my hand where I cannot bestow my heart, as I now am in rejecting your addresses while he disproves of them."

" Most admirable of all human creatures!" exclaimed Monteith, " I will patiently commit my destiny to the care of a lady whose exalted ideas increase my esteem for her at every interview; yet permit me to add one more inquiry. Might I venture, madam, to hope, or should I have been too presumptuous in hoping, that if I had been honoured by Sir William's approbation, I should not have encountered the terrors of your refusal?"

Miss Powerscourt's reply was confused and inarticulate; yet the deep crimson which flushed her half-averted face, and the softness of her accent, did not reduce him to despair. She perceived it did not; and soon as she had recollected herself, she added, " I know the goodness of my father's heart; I know his unbounded affection for me; and I am confident that he will persist in no plan that would make me miserable. But let me entreat you, my lord, not to pursue a method of addressing me which must either make me mean in my own eyes, or diminish my respect for your character." His lordship bowed, and protesting inviolable obedience and unaltered love, rode off just at the instant that John found the key which enabled Miss Powerscourt to pursue her expedition. Her conduct in this interview did not lessen her in her lover's affections, for he

vowed to lord W. that she was an angel in a human form, and that he was determined either to die or obtain her. ~~as mad as birds from yesternight~~ Nor did the Evans's, to whom Miss Powerscourt impartially related this incident and that of the letter, feel any diminution of the love and esteem which the many amiable qualities of their charming young friend had long excited. On the contrary, Mrs. Evans bestowed warm encomiums on the marked propriety of her conduct, and Lucy's eyes shone with that humid lustre which the praises of her dear Geraldine always called forth. Sir William's scheme for the intended disposal of his daughter's hand excited general surprise, mingled with some share of disapprobation; and though uniform respect for his character prevented Mrs. Evans from expressing any doubt of the propriety or practicability of the scheme, the artless open-hearted Lucy was so strongly persuaded of its impropriety, that the moment Miss Powerscourt retired, she could not avoid reprobating the absurdity of allowing her friend so little influence in an affair so infinitely momentous to her own happiness.

"It is certainly wrong," replied Mrs. Evans, "and may be added to the instances I have frequently repeated to convince you of the necessity of conforming a little to the notions of other people; for I have often observed, my dear girl, that you have more tenacity of opinion than one generally meets with in a young woman of nineteen. Do not suffer singularity to creep upon you; for though it now only appears in wearing your hair smooth, while all your acquaintance have theirs curled, or in expressing your dislike to music

" music when all the world is musical, it may  
" twenty or thirty years hence induce you to  
" lay more absurd schemes for the marriage of  
" my grandchildren than even Sir William's so  
" much reprobated plan?"  
Lucy replied laughing, " I will put my hair  
in rollers this very evening, which will, I  
trust, remove your apprehensions respecting  
the preposterous matches of your grandchil-  
dren." If you, my dear," continued Mrs. Evans,  
recollect the circumstances of Sir William's  
life, and analyze his character, his present  
design will appear the natural result of both.  
The virtues which spread prosperity and joy  
all around him are not the result of those  
refined feelings, those elegant susceptibilities,  
which usurp the place of solid virtues in the  
estimation of too many. They are the effect  
of reflection, of principle, of christian prin-  
ciple, my dear, that firmest foundation for all  
that is truly excellent in man. But though  
his idea, that the gifts of fortune are only  
an accountable stewardship, makes him uni-  
formly and perseveringly upright and gene-  
rous; it does not supply those nicer touches  
of the heart which nature never originally  
bestowed. Exclusive of what he feels for  
Geraldine, I question whether his heart was  
ever touched by any sentiment livelier than  
universal benevolence."  
" How came he to marry then?" inquired  
Lucy. The air of mirth with which she spoke  
would have diverted Mrs. Evans at another time;  
but when applied to the present subject it re-  
called painful sensations. " It was not a love-  
match," said she after a long pause; " and  
I fear

“ I fear lady Powerscourt did not study to excite those sentiments of esteem and attachment in Sir William’s mind, which her engaging attentions would have inspired. Though I believe he never felt a stronger tie than what arose from habit and compassion, his natural goodness made him behave to her, during the trial of a long sickness, with so much tenderness, that he was universally accounted a most excellent husband. You know, Lucy, he is not apt to make observations on people or incidents which do not immediately affect himself. The world slides by unnoticed, if it do not elbow him; and though this may conduce to the tranquillity of his mind, it prevents him from enlarging his stock of information. Can you, however, wonder from what he has felt, and from what he has observed, that he should suppose mutual attachment unnecessary in a union between two worthy people? and you will allow Miss Powerscourt and her cousin answer that description.”

“ Most certainly they have the best hearts in the world; but is not lord Monteish too a most worthy character, and in point of rank and fortune a more desirable match?”

“ Fortune, my dear, though in most marriages a very necessary ingredient, is of little consequence in the disposal of Miss Powerscourt; for her hereditary affluence is so great, that she may possess every indulgence she can wish for, without the necessity of her husband’s adding anything to the paternal stock. I am not one of those who slight the advantages of rank; I allow it to be desirable; but if you balance against it the apparent justice

“ of

" of bestowing a rich heiress on her father's  
" nearest male relation, who is educated in the  
" same principles, and will reside upon the  
" same spot where his ancestors have flourished,  
" who will most probably continue to diffuse  
" the same noble benevolence and patriarchal  
" hospitality; I protest, when I think of these  
" advantages, I can condemn nothing but Sir  
" William's characteristical indifference to the  
" state of his daughter's affections. But I ob-  
" serve, Lucy, that of late you always seem  
" uneasy and silent when we talk of Henry  
" Powerscourt; are not you and your old  
" friend and playfellow upon as good terms as  
" usual?"

" Yes, quite so." "Then should you not rejoice at the prospect  
" of his good fortune?" "So I do; but poor Lord Monteith—I cannot  
" help just now thinking of him. I am sorry  
" at my very heart that he should be left un-  
" happy; he is so uncommonly amiable."

" Pray," said Mrs. Evans, " how came you  
" to know that he is so uncommonly amiable  
" and excellent?" Miss Evans confessed that her  
informant was Geraldine.

" Ah, poor Geraldine!" said Mrs. Evans,  
" the eye I see has outstepped the judgment;  
" I hope it has not misled it. What very amia-  
" ble qualities could she discover in a ball-room?  
" Does the indirect mode of his pursuing your  
" friend, since her father's rejection, argue any  
" very exalted excellence?"

" No," said Lucy, " indeed it does not; but  
" do, my dear mother, make allowances for his  
" very strong attachment. I am afraid too my  
" sweet friend's heart is irrevocably his, and  
" ought

" ought she to marry Henry Powerscourt, all  
" worthy and good as he is, while her affections  
" are another's?"

" Your mother's conduct," replied Mrs. Evans, " has shewn her decided opinion upon such a question, nor has she ever found reason to regret the preference which has made her the wife of the worthiest of men. Yet, if in the present conflict of Miss Powerscourt's passions I could hope that my warning voice might be heard, I would entreat her to consider, whether, since her attachment is not the result of long acquaintance and impartial observation, but the transient start of sudden preference, it be not at least possible that her father's plan for her happiness may be the most eligible? She can never now have an opportunity of knowing lord Monteith's real disposition previous to the marriage ceremony. The cautious lover will disclose nothing which is disagreeable, where he studies to recommend himself to favour; and what can she learn from the vague or perhaps interested communications of others? Charge her then, my dear Lucy, in your moments of endearment and privacy; if your Geraldine's happiness be dear to you, charge her to reflect on Henry's known virtues, his modest diffidence, ingenuous gratitude, and gentle, yet generous disposition. Ask her, if these are not the qualities which must insure happiness, and warn her not to mistake a transient liking for an insurmountable attachment."

Miss Evans burst into tears at her mother's pathetic injunction, and promised obedience.

Its author is the Rev'd Mr. Henry Powerscourt, who is well known as being the author of the *Wife of Bath's Prose Tales*.

## C H A P. X.

True dignity is his, whose tranquil mind  
Virtue has rais'd above the things below;  
Who, every hope and fear to heaven resign'd,  
Shrinks not, though Fortune aim her deadliest  
blow.

BEATTIE.

WHILE Youth with democratic violence  
pulls down Reason from her sovereign seat, and  
commits the helm to a rebel root of passions;  
Age, finding these riotous principles quiet and  
manageable in his own particular territories,  
supposes it easy for others to keep them in equal  
subjection, and affirms that the absolute unlimited  
monarchy of the ci-devant princelets is not only  
the best mode of government, but actually the  
most feasible. It is not wonderful that Youth  
should deny the power of those restrictive prin-  
ciples which time and experience gradually in-  
troduce; but certainly Age might remember the  
sentiments that it once felt.

The above observation, though profoundly  
true in general, is, I confess, irrelevant to the  
case before us; for Sir William Powerscourt had  
exactly the same opinion of love at the time I  
am treating of, as he had forty years before;  
and Mrs. Evans was of so singular a taste, and  
had so thorough a contempt for a "set of fea-  
tures and complexion," that, like Desdemona,  
she saw her husband's "features in his mind;"  
for when she selected Mr. Evans, who had no  
personal graces to boast of, she not only encoun-  
tered embarrassed circumstances, but displeased

her relations by rejecting a rich and handsome, but abandoned admirer.

A few days after the events related in my preceding Chapter had taken place, Sir William's bailiff begged his Honor's leave to tell him something that made him unhappy. It was, that he had twice seen a very fine gentleman whispering with Mrs. Bridget in *Ellis's* temple in the dark hour. The groom, he added, seemed to know something about it, for he laughed, and said Bridget had got a London Sweetheart; but Roger somehow thought, though he knew that second-handed gentlemen in London dressed as fine as their masters, that this looked to be another quite kind of body. Sir William thanked Roger for his fidelity, shook his head, and observed that the world grew worse and worse every hour; to which observation Roger, who was of the same age with his master, cordially agreed.

Previous to these communications of faithful Roger, Sir William had felt a considerable share of uneasiness. He recollects that Lady Powerscourt was very fond of relating long narratives of resistless beauties, who, by their unrelenting cruelty, had compelled their desperate lovers to carry them off in chariots and six, surrounded by armed footmen, maugre all their tears and cries; and though Sir William had always considered these tales to be entitled to an equal degree of credibility with those of Mother Goose, his anxiety for Geraldine reminded him, that if Lord Monteith had ever happened to hear any of these stories, they might have put something in his head which he would not otherwise have thought of. He determined therefore to inform Henry Powerscourt of his designs

designs in his favour, and to consign his daughter to a husband's protection some years sooner than he had intended.

That young gentleman passed the college vacations at Powerscourt, and excited the esteem of every intelligent observer by his ingenuous diffidence, unaffected gentleness, and a thousand unequivocal proofs of a generous, grateful heart. His countenance was open, and his features agreeable, though they had no pretensions to beauty; his figure was naturally good, but he seemed quite at a loss how to manage it to the best advantage. He was said to possess very respectable literary talents, but the perpetual raillery of the lively Geraldine against pedants made him profoundly silent upon topics which he was best qualified to discuss. Of the world he was totally ignorant; and he seemed, like his respectable kinsman, to be not very anxious to be initiated into its mysteries. Afraid of being absurd, he never ventured to trifle; ignorant of the small talk of the day, too studious and retired during his college residence to enrich his mind with alma mater anecdote, or to learn the art of practical joking; conscious of his dependant situation; solicitous to avoid intrusion; and ever fearful of offending; he certainly appeared with a reserve and gravity unusual at his age; and he might in a mixed company justify Geraldine's observations, that he looked like perpetual president of the club of the humdrums.

Miss Powerscourt's vivacity found continual employment during her cousin's visits in what she called teaching him the graces, and rubbing off college rust. But though an exuberant flow of youthful spirits made her sometimes pursue

these.

those topics further than her good nature would have permitted, had she known that it gave pain to the object of her raillery; she fed for him the garrulosity of a litter, and treated him with the confidence of a friend. Her heart was truly generous: I do not speak of that light, transient, and sometimes affected disregard for money which young people, who have never experienced its utility, often carelessly display; but of that real liberality which could circumscribe its own desires to increase the comforts of those around it. Far therefore from regretting the sum which Sir William expended in Henry's education and support, for viewing the progress which he made in the good Baronet's affections with envy or jealousy, she continually urged him immediately to bestow upon the valuable oddity, as she styled him, that independence which his noble mind richly deserved. "I even tell him," she would say to her Lucy, "that in so doing he will make me happier; for I cannot help feeling that I was thrown in the way most unseasonably to mar that dear fellow's expectations. But for me, you know, Lucy, he would have been heir to all my father's princely fortune." Such solicitude for Henry's interest had convinced Sir William that his scheme was in the most prosperous way; and when, deeming the golden harvest of hope to be fully ripe, he informed his daughter with a significant smile that he had sent for her cousin to Powerscourt upon business which she was materially concerned, he certainly thought that he was communicating welcome intelligence. Far different were the agonized feelings of Geraldine, feelings which her anxiety to save her elated father from the pangs

pangs of sudden disappointment could scarcely restrain. She flew to Lucy, and, throwing herself into her arms, conjured her by all their infantine tenderness, if she ever loved, ever pitied her, to do something to save her from the dreadful alternative of a detested marriage, or offending an almost adored father's sombre old bias. Lucy mingled her tears with Geraldine's with more than the common sensibility of friendship. She could recollect nothing but her mother's solemn adjuration, and she repeated her arguments with fidelity; but the moment of strong passion was unsavourable to cool consideration.

"Once, my dearest girl!" interrupted Miss Powerscourt, "cease to urge the only proposal to which I cannot accede. Even your mother, shall prudent, all self-possessed as she is, would strongly reprobate solemn perjury. Had this union not been proposed, my regard for Lord Monteith should never have induced me to have taken any step contrary to my father's will; nor should he have discovered that the sacrifice I made to filial duty was at the expense of my happiness! But to bind myself for ever to another, when my heart is irreversibly his; to shut out every hope that time might remove my father's reluctance; honour, delicacy, affection, nay, even my esteem for Henry Powerscourt, all strongly forbid such an unhallowed bond!"

Lucy was quite a convert to these arguments; but when Geraldine again called upon her to suggest some plan of conduct that might obviate these threatened evils, the artless weeping girl could form no other scheme than that she should throw herself at Sir William's feet and own a pre-engagement. Miss Powerscourt seemed not

to have sufficient courage for a discovery which she apprehended must produce disagreeable events; but while depressed and unresolved, she seemed firm in nothing but that she would ultimately reject her cousin's hand. The important ~~eclaircissement~~ came from another quarter.

I shall pass over many unimportant conversations to give a fuller account of the interview in which Sir William unequivocally, and in sure expectation of a joyful acceptance, informed his kinsman of his design to make him the heir of his fortunes, and the depository of his daughter's happiness. But when he expected to see the highly favoured youth break out in a strain of grateful rapture, (for even his phlegmatic temper expected rapturous acceptance when Geraldine was the gift,) how cruelly was he disappointed to see his countenance betray distress almost bordering upon despair, and to hear him in grateful, respectful, but decisive terms, reject the radiant, the alluring prize. Sir William stood motionless with astonishment to see the "cloud-capt tower" he had been so many years erecting prove in one moment to be only "the baseless fabric of a vision;" and as I conceive my readers must be equally planet-struck, I cannot help asking them, in a tone of exultation, whether I have not attained the grand climax of improbability? whether the legends of modern romance, modern poetry, or the modern drama, can produce a situation so novel and striking?

That a prudent, dissident young man, who, without having absolutely laid a plan to make his fortune, was anxiously solicitous to be relieved from a dependance which he severely felt; that such a one, I say, without any preconcerted design

design upon Lady Bridget Autumn's estate, or the jointure of the duchess dowager of Withington, should refuse the young, lovely, fascinating Geraldine, when offered to him by her father, with the immediate possession of three thousand a year, and a certain assurance of an additional five thousand per annum on his death; I think I have been too diffident in only challenging my contemporaries in the circle of the Belles Lettres to rival me in the non-natural: I might also call upon the philosophers of the new school, and ask the illustrious sophists if they can form a paradox more perfectly incomprehensible.

But, notwithstanding my passionate love of fame compels me to adopt the most fashionable, that is, the certain method of obtaining it, I cannot quite conquer the common foible of old people, that of looking back to the times I have seen, and thinking them somewhat better than the present days. Indeed now and then I am rude enough to conjecture that the modern Parnassus is seated very near that "windy sea of land," which Milton names the Limbo of Vanity, the residence of all unaccomplished works of Nature's hand:

" All th' unaccomplished works of Nature's hand;  
" Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mix'd."

Regretting that simple elegance and rational amusement should be sacrificed to high-sounding phrases and inconceivable wonders, signifying nothing, I sometimes invoke the shades of Addison, Goldsmith, and Fielding; and, after having contemplated the forms of nature or morality which their antiquated pages present, I in vain endeavour to be amused with ghosts and dungeons, incident without character, or character without effect. These last sentences recal my

wandering

## A TALE OF THE TIMES.

wanderling pen, by suggesting to me that criticism may be as jejune and irrelevant as the novel or poem which it condemns; and that the satirist of the taste and morals of others must, from prudence avoid exhibiting any thing reprehensible in her own.

Taught by that "warning voice" to shun the rock of digression, I must inform my readers, that the absurdity of my plan may be rather apparent than real. Henry Powerscourt might have some private reasons for his extraordinary conduct. He might have a pre-engagement; and no lover under twenty would hesitate to offer a few annual thousands on the shrine of Cupid. He might be enamoured of academic shades, and think, like Shakespeare's Henry VI.

"Marriage makes, my years are yet too young,  
" And fitter is my study and my books."

Or the vivacity of Geraldine might intimidate him as much as Beatrice's did Benedict, and induce him to offer "to go on an embassy to "Prester John or the Antipodes, rather than encounter that lady's tongue." What his real reasons were must not now be developed; but, knowing the pain of curiosity, I cannot help owning, notwithstanding my usual reserve, that I knew them, and that they shall be explained in their proper place.

The reader must remember that I have left Sir William in rather an awkward situation. Some little hope that there might be a mutual misunderstanding induced him to repeat the offer; and, in a tone that indicated not only surprise but displeasure, he asked Henry if this was what he

he meant to refuse? The embarrassed youth gave a hesitating "Yes," and turned aside to conceal the strong emotion of his agitated heart.  
" You are not ignorant, Henry," said sir William, " that my fortune is entirely at my own disposal, and that all your inheritance is an estate of your father's, somewhat under a hundred a year."

" I know it, sir," answered Henry in a voice scarcely audible; " I know too how infinitely I am beholden to your bounty, and that I could sacrifice my life to prove my gratitude."

" Pho! pho!" said sir William, " a fiddle-flick about gratitude and such nonsense; talking about these things is not to the purpose; I meant to have been a greater friend to you than I have been; but I suppose you have some reasons for your behaviour, and do I shall only add that I wish you a better offer."

He then left the room, while the afflicted Henry, wretched at the idea that he had offended the person whom of all others he most revered and esteemed, sunk upon a sofa, and fell into a painful reverie on his past conduct. His motives appeared so laudable, that he could not upon retrospection wish the deed undone; he only feared that his voice, his looks, his words, or his manner, had not sufficiently indicated the deep veneration which he felt in his heart.

In a conversation which took place the same morning between sir William and his daughter, the former animadverted on Henry's unaccountable conduct in terms more acrimonious than he had ever before used. As a proof of the uncommon sweetnes of Miss Powerscourt's disposition,

position, she appeared not only to forgive the affront, but she even pleaded for the bold refuser with all that enchanting eloquence by which she had ever been accustomed to influence her father's mind.

"I cannot, my dear sir," said she, "condemn Henry's behaviour; on the contrary, I think it proceeded from that inviolable regard for honour and sincerity which you tell me has been from time immemorial the characteristic of our family. A mean interested person would have thought that your predilection in his favour gave him an absolute right to treat me as he pleased; he would never have considered whether I was the wife he would voluntarily have preferred. Looking only at the greatness of my dowry, he would at all times have silenced the compunctions of his conscience, by remembering that I was obtruded upon his choice, when perhaps his heart felt a secret preference for another."

While Miss Powerscourt spoke, her look, voice, and manner, were uncommonly beautiful and impressive. Sir Williams gazed upon her with inexpressible delight; and when she stopped, he only observed, that he thought there were few young men in the kingdom who would not have been overjoyed at such a proposal.

"Parental partiality," resumed Geraldine, "must not decide on such an important point; but let not my dearest father, through his fondness for me, swerve from that noble integrity which has ever been the rule of his actions. From motives of delicacy to myself, I must entreat that the events of this morning may make no difference in your opinion.

“ opinion of Henry. Indeed I should think  
“ that as the highly-liberal plan you had formed  
“ in his favour is now frustrated, this is the  
“ properest time to give him the independence  
“ you design for him. Suppose you immedi-  
“ ately resign the Merionethshire estate. It is  
“ but five hundred a year you know; and if  
“ such a defalcation in your revenue should any  
“ way derange your customary charities, per-  
“ mit me, my dear father, to surrender part of  
“ that very ample allowance which you give  
“ me. It really is much more than I know how  
“ to spend; it only makes me thoughtless and  
“ extravagant; and I am sure that abridging it  
“ would be a good moral lesson.”

“ Speak no more, child, upon this subject,”  
replied Sir William; “ nobody shall say that I  
“ brought a young fellow up, and then let him  
“ starve because he was not willing to marry  
“ my daughter; but there is no necessity for  
“ choosing the very time of his disobliging me  
“ to make him independent, as you call it. I  
“ have been put out of humour this morning,  
“ and I will take a ride round my farm to get  
“ myself comfortable again. I don’t see that  
“ Henry’s staying here longer is of any use, and  
“ I shall tell him that he may as well set off for  
“ Oxford when I come home.”

Henry was roused from his stupor by a letter  
from Geraldine, which I shall transcribe:

“ To HENRY POWERSOURT, Esq.

“ Your conduct, my noble cousin, during  
“ the trying incidents of this morning, super-  
“ adds to the esteem and confidence which I  
“ have ever felt for you, the indelible tie of  
“ fervent

" fervent gratitude. If I ever appear to forget  
" your generous behaviour, add to the list of  
" those infamous women of antiquity whom  
" you have often reprobated, the more in-  
" famous name of Geraldine Powerscourt, who  
" basely neglected the disinterested friend who  
" risked all his fairest hopes to alleviate her sor-  
" rows.

" Be not grieved, my ever-respected Henry,  
" at the apprehension of my father's anger.—  
" It must not, it shall not continue. His own  
" excellent heart will not permit the disappoint-  
" ment of a favourite plan to inspire lasting  
" resentment against the worthy youth who is  
" an honour to his name. Perhaps, under the  
" present circumstances, it will be better for  
" you not to meet, at least till he can see you  
" without too keenly regretting that you cannot  
" be his son. I have heard you express a wish  
" to visit Italy; does that wish continue, or has  
" it been supplanted by some other desire? Say,  
" in what way can I prove that mine is not a  
" mere wordsy gratitude; write to me as soon  
" as you get to Oxford, for I can taste no  
" true satisfaction unless I hear that you are  
" happy. *Never say to thyself I said  
and not meant it.* "GERALDINE POWERSCOURT."

I hope it will not be deemed an imputation on Mr. Powerscourt's fortitude, if I should affirm, that on reading this letter his eyes were observed to be suffused with tears. With a faltering voice he ordered his horses. He attempted to write a few lines, but his hand was too tremulous, and his thoughts too confused to perform the task. The destined heir of Sir William Powerscourt, renouncing all those splendid prospects which had

had opened upon him, returned to the academic shades which, warm with the most sanguine hopes, he had left the week before. He returned poor in every worldly possession, dejected, and dismayed ; but rich in integrity, rich in the noble consciousness of approving virtue.

—*to the intervals of equal strain and the broken*

*silence of the audience, the author, who was*

*very ill, and could hardly stand, said to his*

*friends, who were gathered round him,*

*—Here, before Heaven,*

*I ratify this my rich gift ! O Ferdinand !*

*Do not smile at me that I boast her off ;*

*For thou wilt find she will outstrip all praise,*

*And make it half behind her.*

*—*Shakspeare.**

*T*HE Earl of Monteith was too ardent a

votary of Cupid, to be at all indifferent to

his rival's proceedings. On the first intelligence

that Henry was arrived at Powerscourt, his lord-

ship's valet received orders to examine and clean

the locks of his silver-mounted pistols, and to

have a sufficient quantity of powder and ball

ready at the shortest notice. Alarmed for his

lord's life, Beaufoy instantly informed lord W.

of this bloody preparation, who again prevailed

upon his young friend to wait patiently for the

effect of Miss Powerscourt's evident predilection

in his favour.

Meantime the " tall long-sided dame" whom

Hudibras characterises as a "tattling goom,"

having received some hint of what was really

intended at Powerscourt-house, blazoned it with

all her powers; and, knowing that the intelli-

gence

gence must be particularly interesting at W. park, she put her swiftest winged emissaries into motion. These, gentle reader, were not aerial sylphs, or “ Iris gliding down her painted bow!” modern prose is severely restricted from the use of such ornamental machinery. I can only introduce a lame dowager of consummate prudence and known candour, who had her old horses driven ten miles through the dirt to wonder with Lady W. that any young Lady could reject Lord Monteith, and accept Henry Powerscourt, and to reprobate the extravagant demand of eight hundred a-year for pin money, on which the intended bride had positively insisted.— Another of Fame’s busy messengers was a gentleman fox-hunter, a man of extreme caution and undoubted veracity, who affirmed at Lord W.’s public dinner, that he had met two barristers and a serjeant at law riding post to Sir William’s that very day. On one of the company observing, that three lawyers consulting upon a settlement was rather unusual, Squire Western affirmed with an oath, that one of his neighbours told him Sir William would have it so:— “ These lawyers,” said he, “ are bad quarrel-some fellows, and if two of them should disagree, I will have the third ready to be am-pire; for the wedding shall take place next week.”— Nobody now could doubt his testimony, the words were so very like what Sir William would say.

When the gentlemen adjourned to the drawing-room, the busy sprite I have before alluded to had taken possession of that goodly field, and instigated a lady, at the hazard of engrossing too much of the conversation, to enumerate all the bride’s paraphernalia. One part of the company

pany indeed affirmed, that they were told Miss Powerscourt secretly disapproved of the match; but three young ladies, influenced by the same supernatural agency, protested that they knew better. They were, they said, her very intimate friends, and were entrusted by her with the secret of her attachment to her cousin, which had subsisted from their earliest years.— During these narratives, the countenance of Monteith varied from the crimson glow of rage to the livid hue of jealousy; and, as he was not sufficiently versed in the science of self-command to conceal his strong emotions, the ladies were all highly entertained with the idea that he really was very much in love still; forgetting, or perhaps having never read in the fable, that what is sport to one may be death to another.

It was only by repeated observations, that all those reports could not be true, and that the lady's word deserved confidence, that lord W. could prevail upon his noble guest to suspend the execution of his sanguinary designs. At this crisis the unexpected, the transporting intelligence arrived, that Henry was certainly gone in disgrace from Powerscourt; but neither the lame dowager, the cautious fox-hunter, the criticising lady, nor even the *intimate friends* of Geraldine, could tell why.

The state of affairs, both at the park and at Sir William's, soon underwent a surprising revolution. The lovely Geraldine, with steps once more light as the wood-nymph's, flew to communicate to her dear Lucy the intelligence which her sparkling eyes, and the smiles that played around her fascinating face, had already anticipated. Lord Monteith had renewed his addresses

addresses in the most passionate but respectful terms; and Sir William, contrasting such strong attachment with Henry's cold refusal, had declared, that as his own plans were frustrated, he should have no longer any objection to his lordship, provided some peculiar conditions were granted, with which Monteith joyfully complied. "Felicitate me, Lucy," added Miss Powerscourt, "upon the happy change in my situation. I scorn the mean affectation of keeping a generous heart in suspense. I have owned to my father, that I regretted his rejection of Lord Monteith. Nay," added she, leaning her blushing face on Miss Evans's shoulder, "I have confessed that my affections are irrevocably fixed upon the most constant, the most generous of men."

I will trust that the active imaginations of my readers will delineate all the scenes of joyous congratulation, courtship, and preparation, which intervened between Sir William's acceptance of Lord Monteith's offer, and the nuptial solemnity; and will only premise, that, as the principal figures on the canvas were people of elevated rank and deeply in love, the execution must be masterly. An enamoured Earl must certainly express his sentiments in more dignified periods than an enamoured Viscount; and if this observation be extended through all the "privileged orders," my prudency in shrinking from the hazardous attempt of recording the loftier flights of heroic love is worthy of some credit; particularly in these times, when every novelist permits his plain Williams and Richards to address their mistresses in terms that would formerly have been allowed only to an Archduke or a Count Palatine, except indeed the hero were a professed

professed Knight errant, to whom the use of extravagant hyperbole has belonged from time immemorial.

Let it then be supposed, that after the noble lover had many times repeated his injunctions to Phœbus to "gallop apace his fiery-footed steeds," and had chided creeping Time for not "speeding on the lagging hours," the auspicious morning at last arrived, and the lovely pair, attended by many of the neighbouring gentry, and a numerous cavalcade, composed of Sir William's tenants, proceeded to the parish church, where Mr. Evans joined their hands, amid the acclamations of hundreds, whom the unrefined but liberal hospitality of the worthy baronet had assembled on this joyful occasion.

Though female delicacy would gladly have escaped the oppressive state of public celebration, yet Geraldine was determined not to oppose her father's known predilection for all those antiquated customs which were derived from the feudal barons, whom he gloried in imitating.— Granted in the object of her choice, Lady Monteith presided with unaffected sweetness and polished grace at those festive entertainments by which Sir William strove to diffuse on all around him the overflowing satisfaction of his own heart.

I shall here perhaps be asked, how his general dislike to lords and love-matches, his plans in favour of Henry, and his wishes to perpetuate his own name and family, could be so soon forgotten. This last objection is answered by observing, that a clause in the marriage-settlement secured the inheritance of Sir William's fortune to the second son of this marriage, who was expressly enjoined to receive the name of his ma-

ternal grandfather; or, in case of no second son, the eldest daughter was to convey the Powerscourt honours to her husband. A disposition like Sir William's, though prone to pursue a favourite speculation with eagerness, will not renounce every future good, because its primary wish has proved impracticable, but will speedily return to that harmonized tranquillity which best accords with its natural feelings.— When the doting father saw that Lord Monteith beheld his Geraldine with nearly the same idolizing preference as he did himself, he forgot that he was a Peer, and he almost became a convert to the opinion, that a love match was well enough now and then.

Beside the clause already mentioned, the deed of settlement contained another of a very extraordinary nature. It was, that on Lady Monteith's succeeding to her inheritance, two thousand pounds a year should be solely appropriated to her, that is to say, not merely the income, but the absolute power of giving or bequeathing it to whomsoever she chose. Lord Monteith's lawyer stated this demand to be extremely adverse to the interests of his noble client, whose whole fortune was entailed upon the issue of this marriage; and even Sir William thought that his dear girl was a little unaccountable, in asking for a power injurious to the interests of her own children. The lady, however, persisted in the request, which was indeed the only one she urged; and the matter being referred to Lord Monteith, he, with lover-like complacency, insisted that all opposition on the part of his counsel should be immediately withdrawn.

It

It was also stipulated, that Sir William should be gratified with the company of his daughter and son-in-law for three months every year at Powerscourt. The good baronet, on proposing this condition, explained the motives to lord Monteith: "I do not doubt, my lord, but that "as you will soon have a pretty large concern "in these parts, you will be anxious to get ac- "quainted with the neighbourhood, and to "know the characters of your dependants. I "am now, my lord, very old, and every thing "must soon be your's and Geraldine's. It gives "me pleasure to think that I shall leave you a "set of upright worthy tenants; and I trust "you will act a father's part by them, as I "and my ancestors always have done. I will "introduce them all to you before you leave "us. Poor souls! they have been used to "have their landlords live among them on free "and sociable terms, and it will grieve them "not to see the chimnies of Powerscourt smoke "as they used to do. However, I shall not "expect that your lordship can live here more "than four months in the year when it comes "to be your own; I know you have a seat in "Parliament, and when very particular busi- "ness is going on, you must certainly be in "London; for the affairs of the nation are of "more consequence than the interests of fifty or "sixty country yeomen. You have a very "fine castle too of your own near Loch Lo- "mond, falling quite to decay, I hear, your "ancestors having neglected it for several years. "That is a sad pity, I think: doubtless, my "lord, you will wish to go down there and fit "it up again. Geraldine will be very happy to

" assist you in beautifying it, and making it a  
" comfortable residence?"

It will not be very surprising that some local reflections should induce Sir William to lay a particular stress on the word *comfortable*. Lord Monteith, starting from a reverie, exclaimed, " O, undoubtedly!" Sir William, who discovered that he had been totally absent during his whole harangue, perceiving the object which had fixed his attention, smiled, and forgave him. Nor will my readers be inexorable, when I tell them that the object was the beautiful Geraldine, who, with her " loose hair floating in the wind," unconscious that she attracted any observation, swept the soft strings of her harp in a neighbouring alcove, and chaunted, with her melodious voice, the following air:

Come, Cupid, with ambrosial flowers,  
Rear'd in thy own Idalian bowers,

My nuptial wreath adorn ;  
Here let the purple am'rauth bloom,

Mix'd with the lily's chaste perfume,

And rose without a thorn.

O ! haste, each classic symbol choose,  
The laurel sacred to the Muse

Of elegance and taste ;

With these thy Mother's myrtle bind,  
Best emblem of a placid mind,

With gifts perennial grac'd !

I do not ask thy frolic hand

To weave the perishable band

That fades on fashion's brow ;

My constant soul a tie requires,

Firm as the virtue which inspires

And dignifies my vow.

Give me the mild persuasive art,  
Which holds the captivated heart  
In unregretted toils ;  
Shed thy own lustre o'er my face,  
When beauty mourns each ravish'd grace,  
And youth no longer smiles.

Perplexing doubts my bosom tear ;

Oh ! let me fan with vestal care

The Hymeneal fire ;

Guard it from passion's wild extreme,

And bid his salutary beam

With life alone expire.\*

Having now gradually led my readers to that point where I at first rather abruptly introduced them, I shall endeavour to proceed straight forward during the remainder of my narrative.

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\* Mrs. Prudentia is very sorry that she has not absolutely conformed to the opinion of the Reviewers, who bestowed such liberal praise upon her prose, by entirely banishing the vagrant Muse. She has a most unlucky knack of " hitching into rhyme;" and when the bantlings are produced, she had rather that they stuck on the top shelf of a book-case, than that they should be immediately committed to the flames. With regard to their advice of publishing her poetical productions separately, she can only answer, that she has repeatedly made the unfortunate experiment. Her booksellers all agree in one sentiment, " Poetry will not go off."

As humorous as Winter, and as sudden  
As flaws congealed in the spring of day.  
His temper, therefore, must be well observ'd.  
Chide him for faults, but do it reverently.

SHAKESPEARE.

LORD MONTEITH was one of those common characters which the world every day produces, and which a very little penetration will easily unravel. His abilities were not conspicuous, and his application to the improvement of them had been as great as a rich heir, early become his own master, usually bestows. He possessed a great deal of good temper, and that open-hearted easy generosity which always succeeds in securing general good opinion. His passions were naturally very strong; and, never having been taught the necessity of restraining them, they were increased by continual gratification, till they somewhat resembled the impetuous torrent. Nature intended him to be humane and beneficent; but a neglect of discipline and constant indulgence had introduced an indolent selfishness. Yet still, if a good deed required no great exertion, or if an object in distress luckily presented itself at a moment when he was disengaged from any favourite pursuit, he would not only shew a noble liberality, but also enjoyed a noble pleasure from the benevolent deed.

A character

A character like Lord Monteith's rather fitted its possessor to follow others, than to be a leader. Unhappily for him, his birth and fortune obtruded him into notice, and placed him in situations to which his natural talents were unequal. The splendour of his rank and his reputed munificence surrounded him with parasites; and the impetuosity of his temper prevented him from having any directing friend. Lord W. at whose house he lately resided, was a man of the world, very solicitous that his noble guest should form a proper matrimonial connection; but extending the idea of propriety no farther than to the fortune, the family, or perhaps the personal graces of the lady; and though the young earl, during his paroxysms of love, added to these allurements every angelic quality, he did not accurately define what those angelic qualities really were. Such was the man whom the purblind god, in one of his capricious moments, selected to be the husband of the beautiful, animated, intelligent Geraldine Powerscourt; whose feelings, exquisitely susceptible, had been accustomed to the regular tenor of gentle manners, uniform consistent goodness, and every fond indulgence and mild endearment that parental tenderness could bestow.

The sentiments with which the young couple approached the altar of Hymen were as dissimilar as their characters. The bridegroom thought no further of the awful ceremony, than as it was the means of putting him in possession of an elegant and beautiful woman, upon whose account he had felt a great deal of uneasiness. He supposed that this event would of course greatly increase his stock of happiness; but as to any abridgment of his former pleasures,

sures, or any serious duties imposed by the character of a husband, he had not the least idea of such disagreeable restrictions. He was, indeed, firmly of opinion, that inclination would in future strongly attach him to home, and that he should find the society of his beloved "a perpetual fountain of domestic sweets;" but should that expectation be disappointed, (and some of his married friends had complained that they had been taken-in on a similar occasion,) would any body pretend to say that he had no right to make himself as comfortable as was in his power? He had already a fine house, elegant carriages, and a numerous retinue; he was very seldom at home, to be sure, but he believed that the house-keeper and the steward went on very well; and should he (which was scarcely possible) find no more attractions in his own fire side when graced by the presence of a charming wife, he saw nothing in the marriage ceremony which forbade his making himself happy elsewhere.

The more correct principles and refined imagination of Lady Monteith taught her to consider the man whom she vowed to love, honour, and obey, as the partner of all her joys and sorrows, the lord of her destiny, the guardian of her character, and the guide of her conduct. Conscious that death alone could dissolve the solemn bond into which she had just entered, her most anxious wishes were pointed to one end, that of being for ever amiable in her husband's eyes. She determined to study his disposition with the most assiduous care, to comply with his peculiarities, and by imperceptible, because gentle, means, gradually to inspire that delicacy of taste and sentiment which even her partial judgment

judgment discovered to be wanting in his character. Had her observations been more profound, shade after shade must have appeared; yet, perhaps, had she even seen the whole portrait in its true colours, her strong predilection, and the sanguine hopes which inexperienced youth (and I must add youthful vanity too) had tempted her to form of being able to make a complete revolution in his character, would have encouraged her to attempt the hazardous experiment. She never reflected, that the tender indulgence to which she had been accustomed must render the perpetual renunciation of her own desires a painful task; nor was her experience sufficient to teach her, that the refinements which she meant to introduce, like delicate exotics, could only flourish in a congenial soil.

The first instance that the bridegroom gave of that habitual self indulgence, and disregard to the wishes of others, which might be said to be the predominant feature in his mind, was an impatience to leave Powerscourt long before Sir William had finished have his plans of festal glee. His lordship had, with visible *ennui*, endured the tediousness of a public day, and given such half-civil answers to the exclamation of "I heartily wish you joy, my Lord!" which burst upon him from every quarter, as to excite a doubt in the congratulators, whether he really was or was not glad that he was married. At dinner, he was only amused by observing the indiscriminating appetites of country gentlemen; and when the cloth was removed, as he found himself the object of general attention, he determined to give no vexatious preference; and therefore confining all consideration to his own

reveries, he continued drawing lines upon the table with the madeira or claret, and proceeded no further in the way of discourse than by a hum or a smile. While his right-hand neighbour was describing the best method of improving land, his left explained the advantages of inland navigation, and the gentleman opposite addressed to him a long narrative explanatory of the difficulties attending a law-suit which had been awarded to him at the last Caernarvon assizes. Their manner was verbose, and they talked all together: his lordship, therefore, concluded that they said nothing worthy of attention, and that the chagrin he felt arose from the want of superior society.

He seized the first opportunity of withdrawing from the company to the countess's dressing-room, and on entering flung himself upon a sofa, with so loud a yawn as to alarm her ladyship and Miss Evans with serious apprehensions that he was taken ill. "Are not you well?" exclaimed the former with tender anxiety. "It is impossible to be well among such boors," returned his lordship. "I have been talk'd at all the afternoon, and cannot for my soul remember one single sentence that has been uttered. I am determined to go to London the first opportunity: living here three months would be the death of me. I protest, my charming Geraldine, that you put me in mind of a rose growing in the middle of a wilderness."

Lady Monteith could scarcely enjoy a compliment which conveyed such strong contempt for what she had ever been accustomed to view with affectionate regard. She smothered a sigh, and assumed a faint smile. But the smile and the sigh were alike disregarded. Her lord's attention was now

now engrossed by a favourite spaniel ; with that he amused himself for a few moments, and then dropped asleep upon the sofa.

Another incident a few days after this displayed his humour in a still stronger light. Sir Ralph and Lady Morgan sent an invitation in form, requesting the honour of the bride and bridegroom's company at their seat to a dinner and a ball given in honour of their nuptials. The invitation was written on an elegant card, decorated by her ladyship's own pencil with Lilliputian Cupids lighting their tiny torches. Twenty years ago the Morgans were people in high life, and even the gallant Monteith would not then have blushed to have appeared at her ladyship's parties ; but twenty years are sufficient to annihilate mighty empires, and must unquestionably cause great revolutions in a private family. Just before his affairs were irretrievable, Sir Ralph discovered, that to be one of the very first people is a preliminary step to becoming nobody ; and his lady reflected on the danger of coquetry and dissipation before the last false step had irretrievably ruined her character. They had sufficient good sense to resolve on mutual amendment ; plans of retirement and oeconomy were immediately adopted, and regular perseverance in these salutary measures had enabled them to resume their old family splendor a little before Lady Monteith's marriage. Certainly at this period nobody knew the Morgans ; and her ladyship's knowledge of the fashionable world was so antedated, that the very card she intended should announce her indisputable claim to superior elegance, convinced Lord Monteith that she must be a mere *fata fata*, and that the visit would prove

prove a bore : as a natural consequence, he determined not to go.

On the day appointed, the countess, attired in all her bridal splendor, in compliment to her father's old friend, waited for her lord's approach to lead her to her chariot. Her lord appeared in his morning dress, and in a half-whisper announced his resolution not to go. "I hate state visits," said he, "and I never could endure country balls in all my life."—"But this," returned the countess, raising her pleading eyes, "is absolutely given in compliment to us."—"Never mind, never mind," continued his lordship, hurrying her to the carriage, and at the same time holding a handkerchief to his mouth: "You can make an apology. You see I have got a terrible tooth-ach ; upon my soul, I would not go for a thousand pounds. Come, your father waits ; you will be too late." At these words he lifted her into the chaise, and then, with the voice of one in extreme pain, exclaimed, "Best compliments—sorry I can't do myself the honour—make haste, my love ; if you are too late, I shall be miserable."

Lady Monteith had now, for the first time in her life, the painful task of apologizing for what she conceived to be a moral impropriety in the conduct of a person whom she tenderly loved. Unused to disguise, she faltered in her excuses, which, indeed, seemed rather to make the affair worse than to improve it. She found every thing at the Morgans in state array ; the entertainment was conducted with great decorum ; and nothing but the lamented absence of Lord Monteith seemed to render deficient the éclat of the scene. To compensate for the bridegroom's rudeness

rudeness, the bride thought it her duty to exert herself with greater assiduity ; but her attentions were ungraceful, her wit forced, and her laughter artificial. After having endured a most irksome evening, she returned home, and found that the noble invalid had completely banished his tooth ach and his chagrin, by witnessing the amusements of an ass-race.

Lady Monteith listened with seeming interest to the ludicrous accidents to which rustic competition had given rise, and then ventured upon a gentle expostulation on his absenting himself from a scene which must have afforded him superior pleasure. Her description of the entertainment and the company made his lordship a convert to her opinion, and, unsolicited, he set off the next morning to the Morgans, to make a personal apology for his absence. He found them so unexpectedly agreeable, that on a slight invitation he spent the day with them, and returned home, not ashamed of his own caprice, but vexed that he had missed the pleasantest party that had occurred since his residence in Caernarvonshire. Not that he was any way to blame ; his earliest recollection did not furnish him with one instance of his having acted wrong ; the fault lay entirely in the unlucky Cupids and the painted card.

The season of the year of which I am now treating was May, a period when the country holds out its pleasures only to the studious, the industrious, and the contented. It is of all times the most insipid to the sportsman, who, being deprived of all chance of breaking his neck or blowing out his brains, is obliged to hurry up to town to avoid the puerility of gathering primroses, and listening to the cawing of rooks.

rooke. Lord Monteith had already found his nuptial felicity less perfect than his expectations had conceived ; but this, for the reasons I have above stated, could not be from any error in his own behaviour, or any impropriety in his own judgment : nor did it proceed from the imperfections of his adorable Geraldine, who proved to be the angelic creature he had before supposed her : it was all owing to the odious country, to Sir William's odd ways, and the *tawdry* people whom he suffered to visit him. In London he should undoubtedly enjoy the expected paradise ; there his lovely girl must attract universal admiration ; he should breathe another air, enjoy a different society, receive the congratulations of all his own friends ; in short, he must set off for town immediately.

When, with many polite expressions of regret for being obliged to shorten his visit at Powerscourt, lord Monteith first acquainted Sir William with the necessity of his going up to town, the latter discovered great surprise that he should choose to go to that disagreeable place just when parliament was so near breaking up, and that there was no more national business of importance to settle. " This," said he, " seems to be the very time that you should take a trip to Scotland, to examine the plans of your architects, to set them to work, and to get the soil smooth and ready to plant next autumn. I am afraid, my lord, you are not naturally fond of a country life ; but it is only because you have never been used to it. Get acquainted with your neighbours ; consider the interest which you have in the scenes around you ; remember how much good you may do in a spot where you reign like a little king,

" compared

" compared to what you can do in London, and  
" you will soon be as fond of Monteith as I am  
" of Powerscourt."

The manner in which Sir William uttered these expressions was too much marked by dignified benevolence to admit of ridicule; and the unfortunate lord would have been compelled to give up his London journey from the mere want of arguments to defend its expediency, had not accident favoured him with a convenient reason for putting his designs in execution, which even Sir William allowed to be indisputable.

### C H A P X H I.

*So mourn'd the dame of Ephesus her love.*

SHAKESPEARE.

ON the marriage of lord Monteith, an express was dispatched to Kinloch castle, to inform lady Arabella Macdonald and lady Madelina Frazer of the joyful event. The messenger on his arrival found the castle attired in the most sombre weeds of woe, owing to the death of its *offensible* master, Sir Simon Frazer, who, after having existed for several years in a state of complete inanity, expired at the patriarchal age of ninety-two, to the great grief of his inconsolable comfort.

As lady Madelina was too much absorbed in woe publicly to take an active part in the concerns of the family, the dispatches were opened

by

by lady Arabella, who acted as mistress during the seclusion of her aunt. She read her brother's account of his marriage to the most excellent and beautiful of women, and, after casting a side glance at the chimney-glass which reflected her own figure, she proceeded to open a letter from her new sister, which expressed a hope that the endearing tie of friendship would soon be added to that of kindred; but what appeared to the reader to be the most significant part of the epistle was that where lady Monteith added a pressing invitation to their house in London, and an assurance that she should rejoice in the opportunity of exerting all her abilities to promote the happiness of any of her lord's friends.

The general etiquette of Kinloch castle had established a rule of decorum which extended to the most trivial occurrences. Every motion was to be grave and consequential; and a run could only be justified by one wing of the house being on fire, or by the appearance of an enemy on the coast. So strict were these injunctions, that lady Madelina herself could not dispense with them even upon the affecting incident of Sir Simon's death; for, on being informed that if she wished to see him alive she must come immediately, she rose with her usual majesty, and throwing her train into its proper graceful folds, moved with slow and stately steps to the door of the apartment, where she found, to her deep regret, that she was come too late; a circumstance the more to be lamented, as he went off in a fit, and had nobody with him but his old valet, who was lame with the rheumatism. These observations will more clearly point out the gross impropriety of lady Arabella's conduct, who with a joyful exclamation

tion of "O! my brother is married, and I will go to London," set off full speed to her aunt's apartment.

The sorrows of that lady, though of too deep a cast to admit more than one narrow stripe of daylight, were not so wholly sublime, as not to require now and then a few adventitious supports. The room in which Sir Simon lay in state was contiguous to her own. She visited it every day, and was most sedulously exact in having the emblazonment completed in the highest style of heraldry. In a remote country, where few events occur to excite the attention of the curious, a feudal laird lying in state in his own castle was an agreeable novelty; and as the relict was not averse to the exhibition, Sir Simon became a much more interesting object after he was dead, than ever he had been when alive. All who saw, by repeating what they had seen, excited the attention of others. Mutes were standing all the way up the stairs; all the state apartments were hung with black tapers as big as men; plumes of feathers as large as those of Otranto, and escutcheons and achievements were placed at every corner. Several of the lady-visitants, after having seen all these astonishing things, pleaded the rights of friendship, and entreated that their strong desire of combating lady Madelina's extreme grief might waive the rules of etiquette, and after a little reluctance, they were admitted into her apartment. She generally fainted upon receiving company, though sometimes, if she found herself exhausted, she only exhibited a flood of tears, and called upon the dear shade of her lamented lord. They generally reasoned her into a state of calmness and resignation; and sometimes, if the visitants were Fra-

zers and only the wives or daughters of younger brothers, they sat down to a consolatory pool at quadrille. But even here her ladyship's sentimental tenderness was visible; for she could only be brought to play at that game from a recollection “that poor dear Sir Simon, when he “was quite himself, was remarkably partial to “holding a lone-hand.”

It was at such a time, and when lady Madelina was engaged with such a party, that lady Arabella, forgetting her uncle's death and her aunt's melancholy, rushed into the room, health on her cheek, joy in her eye, and the Monteith packet in her hand, calling out rather too loudly, “My brother is married to a Miss Powerscourt, “and has asked me to come to London.” The affecting word *marriage* flung poor lady Madelina into hysterics, to which indeed the sudden entrance and loud exclamation had previously contributed. On her recovery another source of anxiety was started. Who were the Powerscourts? What alliances had they formed? Had any body ever heard of the family before? Luckily, a very skilful genealogist was present, whose information entirely obviated all anxiety upon the score of degradation; and her ladyship became tolerably composed. It was now declared to be the universal opinion that she had indulged her melancholy quite long enough; that nothing was so good for bad spirits as a journey; and that it would be quite kind and condescending in her to pay a visit to the young couple. Her ladyship for some time strongly resisted the proposal; protested that her intentions were soon to follow Sir Simon, whose ghost she was sure still waited for her, and to die upon the very spot which contained his sacred remains. It seemed

to be doubtful to the lady-comforters, whether Sir Simon had not had enough of his lady's company, for they denied the fact about the ghost; and at last convinced her, that it was exceedingly wicked in a person of her age to talk of dying. After much diffuse argument, it was agreed that the interment should take place a fortnight sooner than was intended; and that when the escutcheons and achievements had been properly arranged, lady Madelina and her niece should prepare for their London journey. The latter closed the conversation by observing, that these were the only agreeable sounds she had heard since her arrival in Scotland.

While lady Arabella speeded the joyous preparation, and indulged all the hopes of future pleasures and triumphs which youthful confidence, aided by her early recollection, could supply, lady Monteith took leave of Powerscourt with far different sentiments. The one, averting her eyes from the detested walls of Kinloch with an ardent wish never more to behold what she called a burying place for the living, could only be interested by subjects remotely connected with dear, dear London: the latter visited every spot which the amusements of her youth had endeared, and took leave of every acquaintance, domestic, and friend, with the soft regret of remembered kindness. Next to those sentiments which her ever-revered and beloved father excited, her separation from the Evans's called forth the most lively emotions. It was at first her intention to have requested that Lucy might accompany her to town; but, had not the proposed visit of her lord's relations induced her to postpone that desire till she could have been fully at liberty to enjoy the unrestrained pleasure.

ture of her society, the indisposition of Mrs. Evans would have frustrated the scheme. That excellent woman was now confined to her chamber by the increase of a disorder under which she had laboured for many years; and though her situation by no means excluded hope, her tender domestic daughter could seldom steal an hour from the pleasingly painful task of attending her, to breathe her fond wishes and fonder adieus to that dearest friend from whom she was now for the first time in her life going to be separated.

#### C H A P. XIV.

Lighter than air, Hope's summer-visions die,  
If but a fleeting cloud obscure the sky ;  
If but a beam of sober Reason play,  
Lo Fancy's fairy frost-work melts away !  
But can the wiles of art, the grasp of power,  
Snatch the rich relics of a well-spent hour ?

#### PLEASURES OF MEMORY.

THE young countess, waving every form of state which might have proved inconvenient in a sick family, walked down to the parsonage, to bid farewell to her maternal friend, as she constantly styled the respectable sufferer. She came just at the time when Mrs. Evans was going to rise, and claiming admittance with the privilege of long-established intimacy, employed herself in airing the good lady's shawl; while Lucy was busily engaged in assisting her mother

to

to dress, and in fixing her easy chair in a proper situation. Mrs. Evans looked at her noble guest with a tender smile. "I perceive, my dearest lady Monteith," said she, "that there is no alteration in your character. Your goodness and amiable vivacity has suffered no diminution from the reserve of rank or the etiquette of dignity; and see the effect it has upon us. We can consider you in no other light than that of our old friend. I admit you to a sick chamber, and treat you with a little groaning, while Lucy finds you some employment, as if you were still the playful Geraldine whom I had used alternately to correct and idolize. Do you remember dressing my cat in a blue jacket and trowsers, teaching it to walk upright, and protesting that it was the very image of your cousin Henry; and afterwards, when you saw him crying at the comparison, giving him the new gold watch your father had just bought you, by way of consolation?"

"I have many unatoned sins to answer for to Henry Powerscourt," said Lady Monteith gravely, "worse than tearing his best Virgil to paper my baby-house, or causing the destruction of his plaster-of-Paris busts by dressing them in high-crowned hats and hooped petticoats to frighten the house-maids. I have blotted his fairest prospects; but I have not forgot that I owe him an indelible debt of gratitude. I have just received from him an affecting congratulation. He writes in a dispirited style, and complains of a low fever; but his wishes for my happiness are breathed in such a strong and affectionate manner, that while I read his letter I felt—  
"I know

" I know not what I felt, unless it were a wish  
" that I had the power of making him as happy  
" as he deserves."

During lady Monteith's speech Miss Evans was employed in mixing her mother's medicine. Her hands appeared to tremble, she dropped the cup, and, while apologizing for her awkwardness, burst into tears. " Your close confinement makes you nervous, my love," said Mrs. Evans. " Go into the garden, and water your little nurslings; your friend will chat with me while you are gone; and I felt so easy this morning, that I intended to omit the draught."

Lucy instantly obeyed. Her mother's eyes followed her to the door; they were then lifted to Heaven, as if enforcing a silent ejaculation, and finally settled upon Lady Monteith with a look of supplicating earnestness.

Silence ensued for a few moments, which Mrs. Evans hesitatingly interrupted: " Till you are a mother, my dear madam, (said she,) you cannot know the full force of a mother's fears. Mine, perhaps, are exaggerated by my present weakness. It strikes me, that my dear girl's dejection is even greater than my indisposition, or your leaving us, could justify. While I have any hopes of recovery, I conceive myself obliged to avoid awakening her strong apprehensions upon my account; and I believe she is not aware that my present illness is attended with symptoms of a more serious nature than appeared in any former attack. If my constitution should prove weaker than my disease," continued she with a still more faltering voice, " I shall leave her to the protection of one of the best

" best of fathers ; but men cannot so well penetrate into the female heart, they cannot treat " our little peculiarities so delicately as one of " our own sex. It would lighten my mind of " many cares could I discover whether my child " has any secret unhappiness ; even if it should " prove such as I could not remove, I could " at least," wiping the tear that would no longer be suppressed, " give her a mother's last " legacy of advice and consolation."

Lady Monteith understood this appeal, and prevented further inquiry by immediately replying, " You think, perhaps, that my dearest " Lucy may have entrusted me with some secrets which she has not revealed to you ; but " I do assure you, if her innocent heart ever " formed any wish or attachment with which " you are unacquainted, her delicacy would " ever prevent her from giving me the confidence which she denied to her justly venerated mother. It is only from such incidents " as have just occurred, that I have gained a transitory insight respecting what passes in " her mind ; and perhaps my late experience " may have made me an accurate observer."

" Do you mean her behaviour on dropping " my medicine ?" inquired Mrs. Evans : " I saw nothing in that, except that she was dispirited and agitated."

" You forget then," observed the countess, " that Henry Powerscourt was the subject of our conversation."

A thousand circumstances crowded at this instant into Mrs. Evans's mind, which confirmed the sagacity of her ladyship's inference ; but though the acknowledged merit of the object lessened the pain of the discovery, the

the tender mother could not, without apprehensive terror, be convinced, that love had trippaled the roses on her daughter's cheek."

"I know of no one," said she, "to whom I could with greater confidence entrust my darling's happiness; yet so many accidents occur to blast our fairest schemes, that I own I wish her heart had proved less susceptible. I do, however, hope that she is not a volunteer in her affections. You can, my dear Lady Monteith, pardon my solicitude; but can you tell me whether Henry entertains reciprocal sentiments?"

Her ladyship appeared embarrassed by this inquiry.

"I think," said she, "at present—I mean—I can hardly explain myself—Henry is too much attached to his studies and retirement; but I hope his chagrin—I mean his habits of seclusion, will wear off. His situation has been very peculiar. It has hardly given fair play to his affections. I trust he will very soon be made independant; I know he possesses great sensibility, and I am persuaded that when his circumstances are perfectly easy, when he feels that he is his own master, if opportunities for frequent interviews should occur, our Lucy's mild excellencies must strike him in the most forcible manner. I know her general character has attracted his warm approbation."

Another tear stole from Mrs. Evans's eyes.

"I see," said she, "my poor girl has woven a net which will fatally entangle her peace of mind during the happiest hours of youth."

"No," said Lady Monteith, with energy; "if my friendship can break this fatal web, my Lucy shall never be unhappy. Nothing

“ in my power shall be omitted to forward the  
“ union of two hearts that seem formed in the  
“ same mould. But if Henry, contrary to my  
“ expectations, should never shew that par-  
“ tiality for my sweet friend which her excel-  
“ lence deserves, even Henry is not worthy  
“ of her, and I will assist her naturally strong  
“ sense and refined delicacy in conquering an  
“ ill-placed attachment. I will keep her se-  
“ cret with religious care. I will seize the first  
“ opportunity to have the dear girl with me;  
“ I will endeavour to fathom Henry’s heart,  
“ and without ostentatious eagerness, will set  
“ her merits as strongly in his view as propriety  
“ and decorum will admit. If all should fail  
“ of the desired effect, she never shall be left  
“ to muse over her griefs in solitude. I will  
“ amuse and console her, nor shall she ever feel  
“ a sorrow which it is in my power to re-  
“ move.”

Mrs. Evans thanked the countess for these gene-  
rous intentions, yet sighed at the fear of their being  
impracticable. The return of her daughter neces-  
sarily gave a check to the conversation, which  
now turned to the subject of Lady Monteith’s  
expected visitors. Her lord had pointed out  
to her the singularities of Lady Madelina’s char-  
acter; but his only observation on his sister  
was, that she was the prettiest creature he had  
even seen, and that she fluttered up and down  
the castle like a bird in a cage. “ I expect,”  
said Geraldine, “ that I shall be much capti-  
vated by the fair recluse, whose behaviour at  
returning into the world after a long estrange-  
ment must be exceedingly interesting and na-  
tural. My lord has her picture. It exhibits  
loveliness personified; but it was drawn pre-

" vious to her leaving England; the character  
" of the girl therefore is most predominant,  
" I should name it untaught nature."

" And what traits," inquired Mrs. Evans,  
" do you suppose have been added by her re-  
sidence in the wilds of Scotland?"

" O, an infinitude!" replied the animated  
Geraldine, anxious to divert Lucy's dejection,  
which the morning exercise had not quite re-  
moved. " As Lady Madelina was uncommonly  
severe, her pupil must be the essence of com-  
plying sweetness. As she was illiberal,  
proud, and reserved,—gentle Candour, yield-  
ing humility, and frank generosity, must  
mark the mind of a young woman who has  
had so many opportunities of observing the  
opposite odious faults."

" Do young women always observe faults,  
and shun those they discover?" demanded  
Mrs. Evans.

" No—only a gifted few, and principally  
my Lucy and myself. I see, my dear Mrs.  
Evans, you are going, as usual, to censure my  
propensity for determining characters from a  
mere outline, and condemning or admiring  
in the gross. I have often laboured hard to  
convince you, that this faculty is one of the  
peculiar gifts of nature, and that though you  
must judge from experience and considera-  
tion, I may draw as clear inferences from  
an intuitive art of guessing. Ah! I see you  
still shake your head incredulously; but Lucy  
shall be my evidence. Do not I find out  
people wonderfully soon, Lucy? Am not I  
completely mistress of their characters and  
propensities before you can have adjusted the  
propriety of their head-dress?"

Lucy

Lucy with a smile acknowledged her friend's superior quickness ; but added " You forget one little circumstance. It has frequently cost you the trouble of a walk to the parsonage to say, O Lucy ! I was quite wrong in my opinion of Mr. or Mrs. Such-a-one. I hope you have not mentioned what I thought of them."

" You are the severest satirist that I know," said her ladyship ; " but upon this occasion I am sure I shall never plead guilty. You and Arabella shall meet ; and if you once pronounce me right, your dear mother will be easily led to think me in future infallible. But," continued she, glancing her eye upon her watch, with a painful consciousness that the moment of separation was near, " I have a favour to ask. I know that you and Mr. Evans object to the introducing this dear girl to scenes above her fortune ; I know that you are tenacious of her valuable society ; yet remember our early endearments, and spare her to me as soon as the engagements into which I am now thrown will permit me to claim her." Mrs. Evans, with a dejected look, answered that her father should decide.

Lady Monteith felt the significance of this answer, and expressed her sense of it by dropping a tear upon Mrs. Evans's hand, which she at that moment pressed to her lips. " Dear, amiable, second daughter," said the good woman, " my anxious wishes, my fondest affections, follow you into that thorny and intricate path which you are now going to tread. I understand enough of the great world to know that a character like yours must attract observation, illiberality, and envy.

" envy. Your desire to please will be called  
" vanity; your sprightliness, levity; your fine  
" accomplishments, an invidious asseveration of  
" superiority. Through this dangerous trial,  
" remember, innocence alone will not support  
" you, and sensibility will betray you. Keep  
" in mind my oft-repeated maxims, that no  
" human character can be perfect, and that it  
" is dangerous to our peace to contemplate  
" with too steady an eye the failings of those  
" with whom we are intimately connected."

" I will remember all you say to me, and all  
" I have said to you," resumed the amiable  
bride. " I will frankly own, that my inexpe-  
rienced heart flutters at the idea of the plea-  
sures and the distinctions which await me.—  
" I shall have many trials, perhaps many  
" enemies; but where shall I find friends to  
" whom I may so safely disclose all my heart, as  
" I do to my dear Mrs. Evans and to my  
" Lucy?"

" Make your husband your friend; endea-  
vour to gain his confidence, and beware of  
" forming dangerous intimacies, unsanctioned  
" by experience, which may tend to lessen your  
" attachment to him. Strive to exalt the pre-  
ference your charms have excited into firm  
" esteem; and if you should not at first suc-  
ceed, or not so completely as you wish, do  
" not sink into dejection. Remember, time  
" will overcome every difficulty, and patience  
" will soften every sorrow."

Miss Evans, who had left the room during  
the preceding speech, now hastily re-entered.—  
" I have brought you," said she, " my ever  
" dear Geraldine, one other little keepsake."—  
Lady Monteith, opening the paper, found a  
poem in red ink, and a purse,

purse, which she remembered her friend had been anxious to finish with the most perfect neatness.

"I cannot take it," replied the countess; "I know that when you netted it, you said you meant it for Henry Powerscourt."

"He wants none of my purses; you shall have it, for you will value it most."

"But if you have promised it my love," observed Mrs. Evans.

"No—he never knew my intention, and never shall."

"He is infinitely more careful of his valuables than I am," resumed the Countess, mingling a smile with her tears; "You have given me so many nice things already, and I am such a random creature—if I should lose it"

"Though you are going to be very happy, I am certain you would not lose my present without sincere pain.—You will never forget me, Geraldine; you will often write to me; and if I should not be punctual in my replies, you will never call it neglect." The friends wept a moment in each other's arms; Lady Monteith's eyes asked her Lucy to accompany her part of the way to the manor; but as the latter made no offer of that kind, she forbore to name her request. Once more she repeated her assurances of inviolable regard, and they parted.

I have gratified my own taste by entering into a diffuse description of this interview. Perhaps it was in no way more extraordinary than common life often affords. They who, disdaining the softer touches of the mental pencil, only enjoy the bold design which sketches the wildest storm of the passions, where the sun of reason never

never beams, and where discretion never controls the raging elements, will pass over the uninteresting page that describes attachment without caprice, dejection struggling with a sense of propriety, and simplicity assuming a disguise which it cannot support! Such readers will not join in the reflections of Lady Monteith, who, reviewing, during her solitary walk home, her friend's behaviour, and rightly ascribing her unwillingness to accompany her to a fear of being led to discuss a subject to which she was unequal, exclaimed, " Dear, artless, amiable girl! Where shall I find another Lucy?"

Early the next morning the Monteiths set off for London. At parting with his daughter, Sir William discovered the deep yet firm regret of disinterested affection. " I shall miss you very much, my dear love," said he; but it is for your good, so I shall not complain. I must look for amusement to your letters now, instead of your pretty prattle! Don't be cast down, child; for I shall not be dull if you are happy." The tender Geraldine could only answer with her tears.

At this instant Mr. Evans, who had been from home the preceding morning, interrupted the family party by his characteristic adieu. " I trust, my dear lady, you are going to make many hearts happy; you will leave many aching ones behind you here." Then turning to Lord Monteith, whose bosom glowed with sentiments which Nature meant he should have been better acquainted with, " Providence," said the good man with patriarchal simplicity, " has intrusted you, my Lord, with a rich jewel. Wear it at your heart."

" That

"That I will," replied the young Earl, shaking him cordially by the hand; "and for the share you had in giving it to me, remember, when I am Prime Minister, you shall be Archbishop of Canterbury." A sudden glow of pleasure brightened the general dejection.—Sir William, enjoying the tribute to his daughter's worth, thus hastily extorted from her Lord, more than he would have done a studied compliment, tenderly pressed his son-in-law's hand, and led his drooping daughter to the chariot.—The carriages drove off. London, and its round of pleasures, soon regained possession of his Lordship's mind, unaccustomed to the finer emotions; while his lady's eyes oft turned to take another view of Powerscourt. "Farewell," said she to herself, "ye dear scenes of my youthful pleasures. Farewell to the home and the protection of the best of fathers! I enter upon an untried, and, if I may trust to the experience of others, a perplexing world. Will the husband of my choice, the future master of my destiny, treat me with such uniform tenderness as my indulgent parent did? Will he guide my inexperienced steps, like my dear Mrs. Evans? or, may I unbosom to him my inmost soul, as I did to my sympathising Lucy? Ah! could I but be sure that I shall return in a few months satisfied with my own lot, find my dear father unchanged in health and spirits, Mrs. Evans well, and my Lucy happy!" A tear obscured her radiant eyes, when my Lord roused her from her reverie, by telling her the number of miles they were from London.

“ yew now red over her ; she is pale ; she is pale in truth ”  
 “ odst blondest red for her ; she is pale ; she is pale in truth ”  
 “ yester evening I am going to see you at  
 “ this Almshouse **C H A P** XV. it is  
 “ here where we are to meet.”

“ Come then, the colours and the ground prepare ! ”  
 “ Dip in the rainbow, trick her off in air,  
 “ Choose a firm cloud before it fall, and in it  
 “ Catch, ere she glace, the Cynthia of the minute.  
**POPE.**

**O**N the close of the first day's journey, Lady Monteith accidentally inquired how far they were from Oxford. “ Admirably recollect ! ” cried his Lordship ; “ I have always intended to go there, and never could find time. We will take it in our way to London.”

“ Don't you recollect,” said the Countess, “ that by the last accounts from Scotland our friends intend to be in town before the end of this week ? ”

“ O ! we shall run all over Oxford in a day or two. Beside, suppose they do get to Portland-place before us, my housekeeper is the civillest, best-bred creature you ever saw, infinitely superior to the myrmidons near Kinloch-castle. She will make them very fine courtesies, and they will glide about and get over their first wonder before we reach town.”

“ But will that be perfectly respectful and accommodating ? ”

“ My dear Geraldine, if you take so much pains to accommodate other people, they will soon give you a surfeit of courtesy. My good

" aunt in particular ; she has had her own way  
 " years enough ; and for fear she should take  
 " up any idea of managing me, I shall shew  
 " her at first that I mean to please myself, and  
 " never care what she or the world think about  
 " it."

The excursion to Oxford being now as irre-  
 vocably fixed as the ancient laws of the Medes  
 and Persians, Lady Monteith privately dispatch-  
 ed her own servant to town with the best apo-  
 logy her invention could frame to her expected  
 guests.

On entering the seat of the Muses,  
 —Mother of arts.—  
 " And eloquence, native to famous wits,  
 " Or hospitable, in her sweet recess,  
 " City or suburban, studious walks and shades ;"

the Countess felt a refined pleasure, uninterrupted by any painful recollections, till her Lord, as he hurried her from the Theatre to the Ratcliffe Library, suddenly exclaimed, " Have you not some curiosity of your own to exhibit at Oxford,—a quondam lover ? How you blush, you little tyrant ! I must see him. I once intended to cut the fellow's throat ; but I am quite in charity with him now.—Where is he ? we will have him with us at the hotel this evening." Indeed, my Lord," stammered Lady Monteith, " I am afraid he cannot come. He is very ill."

" Ill !—O ! then we will go and see him.—What college does he belong to ?—Come, we can go to his rooms first."

" Not without some previous notice," said the Countess. " His complaint is on his spirits,

“ and we shall only agitate him. It is a low  
“ fever.”  
“ A low fever!” replied his Lordship with a  
loud laugh. “ A strong love fit you mean.—  
“ You spirited him off very cleverly, Geraldine,  
“ and just in time to save his life; for I had  
“ written a challenge for him, I wonder, by  
“ the bye, why you came to refuse him; for  
“ he must be one of your own accommodating  
“ sort of people, to give up a charming girl to  
“ a stranger, and afterwards fall sick about her  
“ himself. We will have him; the sight of  
“ you, and a bottle or two of claret, will cure  
“ his low fever.”

“ You are all in the wrong,” replied Lady Monteith, who could scarcely summon sufficient spirits to parry this attack; “ but all your  
“ manœuvres shall not make me gratify your  
“ curiosity by explaining this enigma. I will  
“ write to Henry, and ask him to give us the  
“ meeting; but pray, remember, that he really  
“ is unwell, and also naturally timid and re-  
“ served. Spare your raillery therefore; for,  
“ though you will be wide of the mark, his sen-  
“ sibility is so acute, that it may give him pain.”

Lord Monteith, with truth, declared that he never designed to give any one uneasiness. On returning to the inn her ladyship dispatched the following letter:

“ To HENRY POWERSOURT, Esq.  
“ It is impossible to pass through Oxford  
“ without feeling a solicitude for the health of  
“ my valuable friend; and if it be sufficiently  
“ restored to bear the exertion, your company  
“ this evening would afford me peculiar plea-  
“ sure

“sure I Lord Monteith joins anxiously in this  
“ wish. His impatience to be introduced to  
“ one, on whose merits he has often heard my  
“ father ex parte, would have carried him to  
“ your apartments; but I doubted how far you  
“ might be able to bear his visit. Come to us,  
“ my dear Henry, if you possibly can; perhaps  
“ my lord’s playful vivacity may enliven you.  
“ To see you well and happy is the only addition  
“ now wanting to the felicity of  
“ Your ever-faithful and grateful friend,

“ GERALDINE MONTEITH.”

The servant who carried this epistle returned with the intelligence that the gentleman had been very ill, and was gone for change of air to some friend’s house a few miles in the country; but that his servant happened to come to his lodgings to enquire for messages just as he was there; and that he had given him the letter to carry to his master. “ How far was his friend’s house from Oxford ? ” The servant could not tell. Did he know the name of the gentleman at whose house he was ? ” No. “ Nor the name of the place ? ” Still a negative—“ Blockhead ! ”—but I shall omit the epithets by which my lord expressed his sense of disappointment; for though they conveyed to his terrified lady the idea of his being in a towering passion, habit made them pass trippingly from his tongue without any consciousness of having uttered them. While Lady Monteith therefore, pale and trembling, reflected upon the uniform suavity of her father’s manners, a turn or two across the room set the earl perfectly to rights again,

of again, who, advancing to her with a smile which imperfectly became him, begged the favour of her, as he had lost the diversion of quizzing a dum, to amuse him with a game at piquet; nups! No other incident worth recording occurred during the remainder of their journey to London.

On their arrival at their town residence, a number of servants ranged themselves on each side the entrance to welcome their approach. Though Monteith had not bestowed much trouble in sacrificing to the Graces, he possessed all the natural elegance of a Belvidere Apollo. He presented their new mistress with a look of benevolent freedom, which his features were particularly calculated to express; and he told them, that she was come to make them all as happy and as good as herself. The countess's heart felt agreeably elated. She cast a benignant glance around, and advancing to the housekeeper, who stood at the head of the female party, after an assurance of general good-will to all, she pressed her hand with that graceful affability which was concomitant to all her actions; when the words "Lady Madelina" instantly changed the scene.

Her ladyship was indeed advancing *in propria persona*, bridling with stiff dignity, rendered yet more stubborn by a smothered sense of affront. She congratulated her nephew in terms solemnly sententious, and then bent her knees to the bride with the overstrained lowliness of proud humility. Monteith, though he knew his aunt's character, felt thunderstruck; and the timidity which her ladyship's dress, figure, and manner excited, annihilated all the polished elegance of Geraldine. The parties, therefore, stood like what the sportsmen call hounds at a fault, till

Lady

Lady Madelina waved her hand for her niece to go up stairs first; which the latter declining, the former wheeled round, and, in the same consequential manner, reascended to the drawing-room. Lord Monteith, as he followed in the procession, muttered to himself, "No! this will never do."

The ceremony of being properly fixed in their chairs took up some minutes; and after three introductory hemis, Geraldine ventured to try the sound of her own voice by expressing her regret that they were not in town at the time of Lady Madelina's arrival; the only answer to which apology was a majestic bend. Again the young countess made an effort at conversation, by hoping that her ladyship's health had not suffered from the fatigue of her long journey; another bend, and a negative, was the answer. "Silence again reigned unrivalled queen," till her empire was terminated by the entrance of her sworn enemy Lady Arabella, who, having given the finishing arrangement to her dress, swam into the room to eclipse her new sister in those qualities of wit and beauty for which she had heard

she was distinguished; and certainly, if feature alone could denominate the latter, and volatility the former, the fair Geraldine must have hid her diminished splendour.

Nature, who had bestowed upon the Earl of Monteith the striking advantages of a fine figure and an agreeable countenance, had been still more bountiful to his sister, whose face and person had all the regular loveliness which the vainest mother could ever desire for a darling daughter. These superior attractions appeared in her earliest years; and as the system of policy pursued by the house of Macdonald did not add any

any lucrative temptations to the charms of their females, this rare bounty of nature was treasured with the most unremitting care, as a sure means of securing an honorable establishment. The plan of her education consisted in avoiding whatever was bad for the eyes, bad for the shape, and bad for the complexion ; and in acquiring whatever was perfectly elegant and suitable for a young lady of the first fashion.

I have already mentioned the mournful incidents which in her seventeenth year banished the lovely Arabella from London, and confined her within the secluded walls of Kinloch. The same event put a stop to her improvements and her pleasures. The confined education of her present protectress, Lady Madelina, had not even paced the narrow circle of female accomplishments ; and her observations had been wholly limited to the neighbourhood where her local pre-eminence allowed her to reign undisputed sovereign. No wonder, therefore, that she conceived her niece to be a miracle of erudition, because she could speak French with tolerable volubility ; or that her jejune performances in music and painting should meet with unbounded celebrity among the visitants at the castle, where few understood, and none dared to censure. But, exclusive of the pleasure which even gross adulation bestowed, the three years which she spent in Scotland formed one continued period of mortification and regret.

Lady Madelina's recollection of those early difficulties which had at last influenced her to reward Sir Simon's long and generous attachment, determined her to rescue her niece from similar trials by adopting her for her heiress to those ample possessions which her uxorious husband

band had alienated from his own family. But upon becoming personally acquainted with her, and finding that all the beauty and all the virtues of the race from old Donald to the present times were centered in the peerless Arabella, she grew passionately fond of her, or rather blindly partial to what she fancied the summit of all human excellence. To banish her chagrin, and to awaken reciprocal attachment, she treated her with unbounded indulgence; but as indulgence always defeats its aim, it neither made the young lady grateful nor happy. On the contrary, she grew every day more capricious, vain, and wretched. She could not love or respect a person who neither checked her faults nor strengthened her virtues. She soon learned the art of turning her aunt's weakness to her own advantage, and considered the favours she received as a tribute rather than an obligation. Without one sensible friend to enlighten her judgment, without one correct model by which to form her character, she mistook affectation, elegance, and fastidiousness, for delicacy. Nor did her dislike of retirement proceed from a relish for polished society and refined pleasures. She only thought that the power of her charms was limited to too narrow a sphere; and she wished, like the fair Phaëton of the last age, to "obtain the chariot for a day," that "she might set the world on fire."

Though an invitation to London had at first inspired a heartfelt complacency for her new sister, her reported graces had soon obliterated that idea, and ingrained in its stead the baneful germ of envy. Had the lovely Geraldine entertained similar ideas, their first interview might rather have been called the battle of the beauties, than

than an attempt to conciliate sisterly affection and reciprocal regard. Proteus, the poets tell us, could assume a thousand resemblances; but, whether he seemed a lion or a fawn, he was Proteus still. Like him, lady Arabella could take an infinite of modes on her natural habit; but, whether it was the manner of the dove or the magpie, she was still at heart the vain, cold, selfish Arabella. After a long consultation she had determined, that the brilliant would be best suited to her intention of intimidating her rival; and having arranged her dress in a manner better adapted to the magnificence of a court-ball than to the ease of a private party, she burst upon her astonished sister-in-law, who in vain attempted to trace a remote resemblance of that artless wild simplicity which her creative imagination had assigned to the unknown "Highland lassie."

The introductory compliments were now dispatched in a manner diametrically the reverse of the dry reserve of the former conversation. Lady Arabella was in ecstasy. The careless simplicity of the bride's travelling habit could not pretend to any competition with her own profusion of ornament; and both the beauty and the vivacity of Geraldine suffered from the chagrin which the manners of her visitors inspired. Conscious superiority always speaks in hyperbole. Arabella had been immensely tired with her journey, was rapturously delighted with her new relations, and infinitely solicitous that they might soon become the亲iest of friends. While she spoke, her eye reverted to every object, except the subject of her enthusiastic admiration. Her aunt viewed her with a complacency which the countess thought her features could

could not possibly have assumed, but which was sometimes interrupted by observing what effect this sparkling conversation had upon the Monteiths; for, though it could not possibly answer any end, lady Madelina would have felt mortified if even her nephew did not acknowledge how infinitely his sister excelled his wife. Her observations that evening were limited to a short period: his lordship had business to transact with his banker, which could not possibly be delayed; and he soon left them, whispering his lady, " Go to bed if you are tired of them."

Geraldine did not conceive herself warranted to follow her lord's advice. She made some attempts to gain a share in the conversation; but the playful wit and easy sweetness which at Powerscourt "engrossed all hearts and charmed all eyes," had now lost all its power, and she sunk quietly into the less brilliant but useful character of a hearer; while her guests enumerated the old titles which might be revived in the house of Macdonald, and settled the exact place in which the representative of their honours ought to walk at the next coronation.

They separated at an early hour. The young countess did not find herself disposed to sleep, unaaccustomed as she had been to contempt and to unkindness. Powerscourt and the friends of her youth rushed full upon her mind. " What," " said she to herself, " am I to expect from " strangers, when those with whom I have just " contracted the tie of kindred are even studi- " ous to shew their dislike of me?" To this reflection followed a fear, that her lord would leave her, unprotected, to their pride and folly; and the bitter tears which she had hitherto restrained coursed each other down her cheek.

At  
bliss

At that instant lord Monteith entered. He had met with a party of his old friends, who would felicitate him upon his nuptials, and he was returned home in a very joyous humour.

"I was very sorry to leave you, my dearest Geraldine," said he; "I know it was rude and awkward to go out the first evening after you came home; but it was not in the power of man to endure my consequential aunt, or the ridiculous automaton that Arabella has become. Did they get a little more tolerable after I left them? Ha! you are in tears—I swear by heaven, that if they have given you the least cause for uneasiness, they shall both leave my house to-morrow morning."

Lady Monteith knew enough of the earl's temper to be convinced that this threat would be fulfilled. Her prudence not only determined her instantly to avert from herself the dreadful imputation of violating the harmony of the family into which she was adopted, but it made her also resolve to assume the amiable character of a mediatrix if any contentions should in future arise. Happy in the hope that she should ever preserve her avowed pre-eminence in her lord's affections, her sorrows seemed to dissipate like a morning mist, and she answered with a smile, that she had been wicked enough to be entertained with the eccentricities of the strangers, which doubtless proceeded from too recluse a mode of life; and would certainly be worn off by a little commerce with the world.

"I have," continued she, "enough to condemn myself for;—I have been a petted child, and, feeling your absence this evening more than I ought, Powerscourt returned to my memory. But do not reprove me. My heart,

"Heart, Monteith, is formed for strong attachments! I have preferred you to my father's house and my early friends; yet must I ever remember that such things were, and that they were most precious." The young earl gazed at her with the tenderest regard, vowed eternal affection, and for a moment wondered how he came to find out such an angel.

But while the amiable Geraldine thus pursued her early design of securing, meliorating, and correcting the heart of her lord, his noble relations were employed in adding a little adventitious fuel to their own native fire. The stranger was arraigned (but not at the bar of justice or candour), and found guilty of the following offences, which, as they were supported by positive evidence, could not afterwards be disproved: First, she must be nobody, notwithstanding Mrs. Archibald Frazer, of Annale, had affirmed that the Powerscourts were a good family; for lady Madelina had detected her in the very act of shaking hands with a servant; beside, lady Monteith's terrified manner at first seeing her, proved that she had never been in company with a lady of quality before. Secondly, she was no beauty; for she was not above the middle size, and her complexion no better than a brunette; her features too had nothing of the Rubens' cast, and were totally dissimilar to all the first-rate toasts in the picture-gallery at Kinloch. Thirdly, she was no wit; for she never tried at a repartee all the evening, and her expressions were as common as those of a house-maid. This degraded creature being no longer an object of terror to lady Arabella, she resolved to try if she could not live upon good terms

terms with her ; and lady Madelina observed, that as the girl seemed good-tempered, and had a large fortune, perhaps her nephew, who was but a thoughtless kind of a young man, could not have done much better.

### C H A P. XVI.

Good humour, only, teaches charms to last,  
Still makes new conquests, and maintains the past;  
Love rais'd on beauty will like that decay,  
Our hearts may bear its slender chain a day;  
As flow'ry bands in wantonness are worn,  
A morning's pleasure, and at evening torn;  
This binds in ties more easy, yet more strong,  
The willing heart, and only holds it long.

POPE.

THE ceremony of congratulatory cards now commenced. It was followed by visits from those ladies who wished to form a closer intimacy, and by the introduction of the bride and lady Arabella at court. The death of Sir Simon, though now nearly banished by subsequent events from the memory of his amiable relic, was still too recent to allow of her joining in these ceremonies. She could, therefore, only hear from lady Arabella, what she would rather have seen, that the bride was completely outdone upon every occasion. The fair narrator's laudable design of making her aunt happy tempted her to some small exaggerations. The Grecian model of beauty, which the form and face of Geraldine,

Geraldine resembled, was more consonant to the public taste than the round visage, uniform regularity of features, and auburn locks of the northern beauty. The figure of the latter was indeed more conspicuous; but being less correctly moulded by fashion, it seemed to yield in elegance to the polished symmetry of the ever-graceful countess. The lily and the rose were rivalled by Arabella's complexion; yet lilies and roses may be bought at Warren's, which by candle-light look almost as well as nature; but what cosmetic can bestow that "pure and eloquent blood" which spoke in Geraldine's face, and might almost justify the opinion of the poet, "that her body thought?"

If from their persons the observer reverted to the dress and manners of the sister beauties, the palm indisputably belonged to the countess. In her selection of ornament the correctness of her taste led her to reject what was exuberant and superfluous; and by studying suitableness rather than splendor, she ever appeared with the graceful propriety of a woman of fashion; while lady Arabella was lost in the maze of tassels and bounces. The terms upon which Sir William Powerscourt lived with his neighbours were not calculated to inspire his daughter's mind with any ideas of inherent superiority, further than what her own merit justified. His family pride was not of a hostile character. It rather taught him to respect himself, than to despise others. Educated in the spirit of benevolence and universal good will, if any indications of latent vanity sometimes appeared to check the nobler growth of Geraldine's soul, Mrs. Evans was ever at hand to eradicate the pernicious weed. The internal principle thus secured,

her

her native good sense and observation taught her to copy the exterior of politeness from the best models which her situation afforded; and on her entrance into the first circles, she only appeared to want a little familiarity with peculiar customs, to realize in its fullest perfection the character of a well-bred woman.

On the contrary, lady Arabella's attempts to shine, announced the effort, and missed the effect. Hauteur could not command respect from those who, equal or superior in rank, allowed nothing to the claims of a longer pedigree. Confessedly inferior to most young ladies of her own station in acquired graces, the mere attraction of beauty, though soon felt, was as soon forgotten. The flippant observation and severe sarcasm, which at Kinloch-castle passed for eloquence and wit, could not endure the test of more competent judges, who cannot relish a sneer unless recommended by some other quality than mere malignity. When to these considerations is added the reflection, that the world is generally more inclined to approve those who solicit their favour than those who command their attention, it will not be wondered at, that general opinion loudly proclaimed lady Monteith a very charming woman; and that if ever the silence of polite reserve was interrupted by repeated inquiries of "What do you think of 'Lady Arabella Macdonald?'" the most candid answer generally received was, "Nothing very striking."

The Philosopher who attempts to describe the secret powers of nature will not expect to trace the footsteps of the sovereign Queen, "in crowded cities" or "the busy haunts of men," but in the sequestered glen or uncultivated mountain.

tain, The Moralist who, by a description of the human character, wishes to correct the failings of the human heart, will not place his sphere of observation in those scenes where fashion prescribes a genteel uniformity of manners. The crowded rout, where every body is well-bred; the drawing-room, where every body is well-dressed; the public breakfast, where every body is lively; and the opera, where every body is in ecstacies, may prove an author's intimacy with the great world; but however the reader may be dazzled by the glare of finery, the mind commonly complains of meagre entertainment. A few general observations will suffice to describe the first month of lady Monteith's acquaintance with fashionable life. She trod the giddy maze of dissipation with firm but graceful step. The voice of flattery, though soothing to her ear, excited no dangerous emotion. Her character retained its primitive virtues, her heart remained faithful to the impression which was now consecrated by indelible ties, and her judgment continued to prefer the mild lustre of connubial happiness to all the glare of fashion, and all the fascination of pleasure.

The earl of Monteith still continued to think his Geraldine the most perfect of all human beings, and himself the most fortunate man in the world. It was impossible for him to think otherwise; for all his young friends declared him a happy fellow, and his courtly acquaintance pronounced his lady to be the most divine creature ever seen. It was astonishing, they said, how she could acquire such an air of high ton in her secluded situation; and still more wonderful, that the resplendent fame of the fair recluse had not pervaded the rural shades by which

which she was surrounded. "Your taste in  
"beauty, my lord," they added, "is perfectly  
"acute, and the world is infinitely obliged  
"to you for introducing this paragon to its ado-  
"ration."

His lordship always went home in raptures from such conversation; but his lady was either gone out with a party, or the presence of his noble relations qualified his transports, and convinced him that one angel cannot protect the joys of the domestic paradise, if spirits malign over-leap the sacred inclosure. The hours intended to be devoted to the endearing charities of private life were most commonly usurped by high dispute and sour contradiction, to which the softening observations of the countess could not always give the air of sportive railing. Lady Arabella's positive refusal to attend a public breakfast given by one of her brother's greatest intimates, and to which he had thoughtlessly engaged his female inmates without previously consulting lady Madelina, disconcerted the earl so much, that he determined even to give up the pleasures of London, and to betake himself to the wild shores of Loch Lomond, rather than continue where he could not be master of his own actions. To his loud complaints against feminine perverseness, his lady vainly attempted to oppose her observation, that though lady Arabella's refusal to go had rather an air of pertinacity, it merely restricted her own conduct, and could by no means be construed into an attempt to controul his perfect liberty. The truth was, lord Monteith was as desirous of governing as his sister was unwilling to obey; and his querulous hatred of restriction led him to scrutinize every word, look and action, which seemed

seemed to militate against the wisdom of his decisions and the freedom of his conduct. Lady Arabella's refusal to go to the breakfast had been aggravated by some reflections on the inviter's rudeness in not returning her courtesy at Ranelagh, to which lady Madelina added, that a neglect of politeness was the true criterion by which a plebeian family might always be discovered. His lordship so bitterly resented this sarcasm, that, regardless of the fair fame of the titled Macdonalds now committed to his charge, he resolved to convince the world that peers of the realm may be as unpolite as commoners; and though lady Madelina and her niece talked of removing to a villa near Richmond in about a month, he determined not to endure the temporary thraldom, but immediately to emancipate himself from their sitters, by setting out for Monteith; and, with the inconsistency which frequently marked his character, he appointed the very morning fixed for his friend's public breakfast for his own departure.

Lady Monteith's heart, as I have already hinted, was not wedded to the amusements of London. Her natural taste and early habits did not teach her to start affrighted at the name of solitude, nor did the recollection of mild colloquial pleasures induce her to regret the society she was going to leave. On the contrary, had the manner been better suited to the project, the proposal of visiting her lord's hereditary possessions would have met her entire approbation. She would have rejoiced in the prospect of renewing those ties of gratitude and generosity, which had been long dissolved; and the hope of reanimating a forlorn desert region would have afforded equal gratification to her native benevolence and

inherent love of distinction. But while she recollects her lord's often-repeated preference of London and abhorrence of Scotland, she regretted that pique and displeasure, not duty and conviction, had wrought the desired change.

Ruminating with deep regret on those traits of her husband's character, of which this incident gave her a full view, she shuddered at the idea of her own misery if the fatal period should ever arrive when she should lose her present influence over his affections. What was she to expect from passions so irritable, so impatient of control, and from a disposition so little influenced by the restraints of decorum, or the opinion of the world!

Mrs. Evans's remembered admonition diverted her mind from pursuing this melancholy theme; but, as she traced the chain of her parting precepts, she felt that there was one observation with which she never could coincide. Should the event which her fears anticipated ever take place, she knew it would be a misfortune which time could never overcome, a sorrow which patience never could soften.

While the sweetly-tempered mind of the young countess framed extenuating apologies, and concerted a thousand little acts of attentive kindness, to mitigate the painful effects of her lord's self-willed negligence upon the minds of his friends, she was agreeably surprised to find affairs in the best train possible; and a greater degree of cordiality and good-humour arose from what she suspected must have proved the death-blow to family amity. No sooner had the earl announced his intention of setting out for Scotland, and trying to make his old castle something habitable, than the active imagination of lady

• Madelina

Madelina flew back to the times of her grandfather, when Monteith was in its greatest splendor. She again anticipated the sound of the bugle-horn, reverberating round its projecting towers, to summon the clan to attend their feudal chieftain to a hunting party or a curling match. Her mind now recurred to the grandeur of a public day, the court glittering with splendid visitors, the desolated halls resounding with the cheerful notes of the bagpipe, and numerous servants in gaudy liveries conducting the astonished guests through the long galleries to a magnificent entertainment. Fired at the idea, her countenance lost its usual asperity, and with an air of melting kindness she applauded the wisdom of her nephew's project. "By all means," said she, "endeavour to restore the castle and its vicinity exactly to the same state in which it was at the time of your great-grandfather. Never be seen beyond its walls without a train of archers and broad-sword-men. Your ancestors would not even appear at Stirling without fifty attendants, most of whom were Macdonalds in the right line. It struck an awe into the neighbourhood; for not one of these gentlemen ever condescended to engage in any mercantile pursuits, but dined every day at the laird of Monteith's table. The country was not then over-run with upstart traders, who by introducing manufactoryes, as they call them, corrupt all the common people, and render them insolent to their superiors. I remember, even when I was a child, that if a coach with the Macdonald arms quartered upon it did but pass through Glasgow, all the inhabitants ran to the door, and testified their respect by suitable gestures;

" but now you may traverse the whole town,  
" and not one loom shall be stopped to pay you  
" you a proper compliment."

Let not the reader suppose that Lady Madelina's harangue was intended to have terminated so abruptly. It might have extended to the length of the expostulation of the ghosts in Gray's "Long Story," had not Arabella taken advantage of a cough to rejoice that her dear sister was going to recruit a little in the wholesome air of the Highlands, after the fatigues of dissipated London. The pleasure which glowed in her countenance did not, however, in truth, result from her hope that the faded cheek of Geraldine might soon resume its pristine roses. In spite of the contempt which she affected, the absence of a rival who abridged her conquests and humbled her vanity was the real source of Arabella's joy.

Lord Monteith was so delighted to find his plans thus cordially approved, that his resentment immediately softened, and he politely offered his aunt the use of his house in London till she could fix herself in an agreeable residence. Her ladyship repaid the favour, by promising to restore all the valuable embellishments which she had surreptitiously conveyed to Kinloch castle, as soon as Monteith was reinstated in its pristine splendor.

"John is the closest confidante I have," said Tom. "He may traverse the world over, but he will always be a boy to me."

CHAP. XVII.

True the riches of my former fate :

Sweet comfort's blasted clusters I lament:

**I tremble at the blessings once so dear.**

YOUNG.

THE day preceding that fixed for her departure from London, Lady Monteith was painfully surprized by the presence of an unexpected visitor. This was no other than Henry Powercourt, who, having at last determined to visit Italy, imposed upon himself the severe task of bidding farewell to that treasure, the loss of which had rendered his native country a desert scene, barren of every joy and every hope.— Having thus divulged a secret, at which before I only hinted, it still remains necessary to develop the motives that induced this extraordinary lover to refuse the blessing which the amiable singularities of Sir William Powercourt had placed within his reach.

From his earliest youth his susceptible mind had felt the full power of his cousin's charms; but while his admiration rendered her raillery more exquisitely painful, it prompted the ardent yet unacknowledged wish to acquire every laudable quality which could recommend him to the favour of the loveliest of her sex. His inexperienced heart knew not the nature of that passion to which it was a victim; if it had, the native rectitude of his mind would have started

with

with inbred horror at a discovery that seemed to stamp every ungenerous, mean, and ungrateful vice upon the unprincipled villain, who dared to lift his selfish eyes to the angelic daughter of his honoured benefactor. So far, therefore, from taking any indirect means to obtain the object of his wishes, those wishes were unperceived even by himself, and he fancied that he cherished no other sentiments than such as could be justified by the ties of friendship and affinity. The general admiration which Geraldine attracted seemed to confirm this idea; and though the quietude which he ever felt at hearing of her having made any particular conquest might have removed the delusion, he still soothed himself with the persuasion that his anxiety arose only from a friendly solicitude for her welfare, and he forbore to probe the wound till it became too deep to admit of cure.

The terms of the letter in which Sir William had summoned him to Powerscourt excited a wild tumult of hopes and fears, and first convinced him that the interest he took in his fair cousin's happiness was not so entirely abstracted from selfish considerations as he had supposed.—A faithful old domestic, who was the bearer of this epistle, could not forbear telling the enraptured youth, that the general report of the family pointed him out as the heir and son-in-law of their respected master. A thousand expressions of Sir William's were now recollected in an instant, and Henry's ardent mind explained their equivocal nature as decidedly significant of the generous plan which had been long formed in his favour. His reception elevated these hopes into certainties; for, though Sir William forbore any particular explanation, the uncommon

mon kindness of his manner, and some injunc-  
tions to Henry to do such and such things after  
he was gone, banished every remaining doubt of  
his intentions.

Nor did Miss Powerscourt's unusual dejection alarm her lover with the apprehension that her sentiments were not in unison with her father's. He thought that a reflecting mind must feel a temporary depression during the period of a decision so momentous to its future welfare. Yet while he regretted the absence of that charming vivacity which he alike dreaded and admired, and anxiously wished that Sir William's expected declaration would release him from that silence which his delicacy prescribed, and leave him at liberty to reassure his mistress's virgin heart by protestations of fervent gratitude and unalterable love, he thought even Geraldine herself never appeared so lovely with all her enchanting graces sporting around her, as she did in her present interesting melancholy.

This golden dream soon terminated. On the fourth morning after his arrival at Powerscourt, Henry surprised Geraldine in an agony of grief too violent to be referred to any other cause than extreme and hopeless sorrow. The solicitude of generous love was instantly awakened, and he entreated her confidence in terms strongly indicative of affectionate sympathy. "If," said the lovely mourner, fixing her radiant eyes upon him with a firm but despairing look; "if you are indeed the noble disinterested Henry I have ever supposed you, I may yet be happy; if not, I am a wretch for life. This is not a time for disguise and affectation. My father intends that you should be my husband; but though I esteem your virtues, my heart avows

" avows a preference for another, which I never  
" can surmount. Nothing but misery can re-  
" sult from our union. Be generous, Henry ;  
" and, by refusing me, prevent a disclosure  
" which would be destructive to my father's  
" peace, and to which nothing but despair shall  
" ever drive me."

As all language would be inadequate to de-  
scribe the feelings of Mr. Powerscourt, I shall  
only say, that he silently dropped the fair hand  
which he had ardently grasped at his entrance,  
and, after a minute's pause, stammered out a  
few words expressive of his resolution to comply  
with her request. He then hastened to the door.  
" Stay," said Geraldine, whose heart, relieved  
from the burden of her own sorrows, instantly  
set for him to whom she appeared to have trans-  
ferred the insupportable load ; " Stay, and hear  
the effusions of gratitude, esteem, friend-  
ship" — " No," laid the tortured youth,  
breaking from her, " if I stay another moment,  
I never can resign you."

His subsequent conduct has been already de-  
scribed, and the mystery of Lady Monteith's  
requiring two thousand pounds a-year to be left  
at her sole disposal will be explained, by observ-  
ing that she thought even that splendid donative  
would be inadequate as a proof of her esteem  
for a man who had evidently sacrificed his own  
happiness to her's. Her affectionate wishes  
pointed to Lucy Evans as his best and most suit-  
able reward.

Sir William's resentment at Mr. Powerscourt's  
supposed indifference to his daughter's merits  
had soon subsided, and a little after the departure  
of the Monteiths he sent him a friendly invitation  
to come and see him, with an assurance  
that

that he was ready to serve him in whatever way he thought proper to point out. Henry determined upon this visit, with the expectation that his melancholy would be relieved by frequenting the scenes in which he had nursed his infant passion, and that the conversation of his respected benefactor would sooth his saddened spirits. The air of dejection and indisposition which was spread over his countenance excited the kind attention of his benevolent kinsman. He took him all the walks and rides he used to take with Geraldine, and, by way of diverting him, constantly dwelt upon a theme which he thought must be pleasing, the affection of Lord Monteith, and his daughter's happiness. "It is very strange," Sir William sometimes said to himself, "that Henry refused Geraldine, and yet he don't like to hear of her being happy with her husband; and after all, they never used to fall out; and Henry is a very good young man, with nothing of envy or malice in his disposition."

He saw but little of the family at the rectory. Mrs. Evans declined rapidly; her husband seemed to need all the consolations of strong sense and Christian fortitude to support the shock, and the gentle Lucy sunk, like a broken lily under the beating of "the pitiless storm." She seemed studiously to shun conversing with Mr. Powerscourt; and when an interview was unavoidable, she was not only dejected but reserved. As he once attempted to recall to her remembrance the joyous scenes of juvenile amusement, when the manor-house and the parsonage seemed alternately the temple of innocent cheerfulness, she turned suddenly, and, gazing at him with a penetrating smile, observed,

"that the temples remained, but they had lost  
the goddess who irradiated the scene?" or  
Disappointed in his expectations of finding  
consolation in those objects which used to admi-  
nister delight, Henry at last answered Sir Wil-  
liam's inquiries of what he could do to serve  
him, by remarking, that he thought the salu-  
brious climate of Italy might be of service to  
his health, and that the numerous objects which  
it presented to the curious eye might dissipate  
the languor which indisposition excited.—  
Though Sir William was convinced that Eng-  
land, particularly Caernarvonshire, was the most  
healthful climate in the world, and contained a  
sufficient number of wonders to entertain any  
rational man, yet he thought that the whimsies  
of sick people should be treated with the same  
indulgence as their palled appetites. His af-  
fert was accompanied by a liberal allowance;  
but he charged him to stop in London, and, if  
Lord Montcith and Geraldine had not left it,  
to make their house his home for a few weeks.  
"The company of your cousin," said he,  
"will do you good; and my Lord is still live-  
lier than she is. Beside, you may have an  
opportunity of getting the best medical ad-  
vice the kingdom affords; and, I charge  
you, don't be guided by outlandish physicians  
while you are abroad, for they never can un-  
derstand what is proper for an English con-  
stitution. I have no doubt, Henry, that  
your good sense will keep you from running  
wild, as many of our young fly about tra-  
vellers do; and I dare say you will not dis-  
grace my regard for you, by pretending,  
when you come back again, to like other  
countries better than your own."

No physician at that time residing in London who "could minister to a mind diseased," or who could "pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow," Mr. Powerscourt did not apply for medical assistance; and he regretted that the established laws of society compelled him either to visit the fair troubler of his peace before he left England, or, by attempting excuses to which his ingenuous nature was unequal, excite suspicions of a secret which he flattered himself was confined to his own bosom. He called at Portland-place at an unseasonable hour, and without previously announcing his intentions.—He was, however, admitted, contrary to his hopes, and found himself in the Countess's dressing-room before he had acquired sufficient fortitude to support the trying interview. He advanced with timid steps, resigned her offered hand with respectful coldness, and, glancing his eyes over the happy envied Monteith, took a chair, and attempted a perplexed conversation.

His Lordship immediately found that his intended railing had lost all its enticing piquancy. The vexation, embarrassment, and evident indisposition of this rival affected his good nature, and he strove by repeated attentions to dissipate his confusion. But as it rather increased than diminished, his Lordship recollecting that his behaviour might have an air of insult; and, after two or three attempts to occupy his own mind by reading the charades written on a fire-screen, he at last considered, that the most conciliating conduct he could adopt would be to take himself out of the room, which, after desiring Henry to spend the day with them, he immediately

not immediately did, with too much precipitation to  
hear his reply, so long as most hurried

Lady Monteith was by this time sufficiently  
recovered from the perturbation which native  
delicacy and innate benevolence had excited,  
to inquire after her father's looks and spirits.  
She heard with delight that he seemed perfectly  
well. "And," added Henry, "I have the un-  
speakable pleasure to say, that, thanks to  
your generous mediation! I seem completely  
restored to his favour."

"Do not talk of my generosity, Henry, for  
I should enter upon a never-ending  
theme—But our friends at the rectory—Can  
you tell me any good news of them?"

"Mrs. Evans declines rapidly—she cannot  
continue long."

"O, my dearest Lucy," said the countess,  
bursting into tears, "excellent, forlorn girl!  
who will comfort you!"

"Can those be forlorn whom you love?"  
replied Henry. "Your friendship, Geraldine,  
is a blessing which must compensate for every  
other loss."

"You forget that my present situation im-  
poses duties upon me which no longer leave me  
at liberty to fly to that dear girl to comfort her  
filial sorrow. Does she seem sensible of her  
approaching calamity?"

"I do not know; I saw very little of her.  
Can you tell me, Lady Monteith, why I  
have been so unfortunate as to lose Miss  
Evans's confidence?"

"You cannot have lost it; I know her sen-  
timents too well; she regards you with all  
the esteem your merit deserves."

"I thought

"I thought myself a blank in the creation,  
" banished from the good opinion of every one  
" except your excellent father." "M y bed  
" Indeed, Henry, you must cast aside this  
" misanthropic humour. It robs you of all the  
" amiable candour natural to your character."

" I trust, Lady Monteith, I shall find it the  
" disease of the climate. In eight-and-forty  
" hours I hope to bid a long farewell to Eng-  
" land, to all my sorrows, and—" he just re-  
collected himself in time to forbear adding,  
" and to you."

" Let me not," said the countess in evident  
emotion, " engross any more of your time,  
" which must be fully occupied with prepara-  
tions for your journey. We shall, I trust,  
" meet on your return, with the reciprocat-  
pleasure our early interviews afforded. Per-  
mit to address to you those sentiments in  
" writing which I find it impossible to utter in  
" conversation."

He replied, " Your letters, madam, will be  
invaluable." Finding his resolution unequal  
to the task of further conversation, he presented  
his address, bowed, and withdrew.

As Henry Powerscourt will not for some  
time appear again upon the scene, I shall sub-  
join Lady Monteith's first epistle to him, with  
his answer. They occasionally corresponded dur-  
ing his residence abroad; but the remainder of  
his letters were irrelevant to the subject of this  
history.

To HENRY POWERS COURT, Esq.

Do not accuse me of departing from the  
delicacy of my sex, if the warm interest  
which

which your welfare and happiness excite induces me to adopt a freedom in my expressions which our near affinity and long friendship alone can justify. Far from feeling the cruel pride of conquest, my heart participates in your dejection so strongly, that while I fancy myself the cause of your unhappiness, I think it is selfish in me to enjoy that cup of blessing which would otherwise be my portion.

I have reconsidered my conduct from my girlish days. Youthful levity may have led me into indiscretions; but my conscience acquits me of the base coquetry of endeavouring to excite hopes which I never meant to confirm. Let the friends whom I shall ever esteem, after a retrospect of his own conduct, declare what part of his behaviour expressed sentiments too lively to be applicable to the affection of a relation, and the intimacy of a companion. If I rightly appreciate the purity of his principles, he would have rejected with abhorrence every design of forming a connection unsanctioned by my father's approbation, and the knowledge of that approbation was not communicated till my heart had lost the power of being just to the merits of the man he proposed.

When I appealed to your generosity, I knew not how painful a sacrifice I required. The more I feel it, the more I venerate your character; while my knowledge of your firm self-denying fortitude encourages the hope that it will be finally exerted for the restoration of your own peace of mind; that time and absence will prevent your exalted spirit from bending under an unavoidable disappointment;

ment; and that your affections will at last be  
just to the merits of some amiable woman,  
who, with virtues superior to what I could  
ever boast, will bless you with the undisputed  
preference which, much as I esteem your  
merit, I never could bestow. England, my  
dear Henry, contains many fair patterns of  
feminine worth; but I will not point that  
excellence which your judgment will best dis-  
cover. Let it suffice for me to say, that, as  
my happiness must be incomplete while cor-  
roded by the sorrows of those whom I tender-  
ly love, prudential considerations need not  
circumscribe your choice. I owe you a debt  
of gratitude, which a pecuniary recompense,  
however liberal, can never repay. Let me  
hear frequently from you; and let me hope  
that the reasons will soon cease which banish  
you from the sight of your own mind.

As to yourself, I am  
**GERALDINE MONTEITH.**

To the Countess of MONTEITH.

I confide in your honour for the conceal-  
ment of a passion which I trust your discern-  
ment has alone discovered. No blame at-  
taches to the conduct of the most amiable of  
women. The audacious but inexperienced  
youth, who presumed to admire the most attrac-  
tive pattern of female loveliness he ever  
beheld, deserves to suffer for the presump-  
tuous hopes which a father's preference first  
tempted him to encourage.

Anxious to avoid giving pain to that heart  
which I earnestly pray may long continue the  
peaceful seat of connubial happiness, I will  
endeavour to exert the firmness you recom-  
mend.

“ mend. I will pay a strict regard to my health, and court amusement in every justifiable form. Should I fail in my efforts to regain my peace of mind, let not the rectitude of your principles start at the idea of inspiring an unwarrantable sentiment in my breast. An innocent attachment shall never degenerate into a guilty passion. I remember that you are now the wife of the Earl of Monteith: I remember that I withdrew my pretensions in deference to his juster claim. Eternal infamy light upon the wretch who seeks to dissolve a bond sanctioned by every law human and divine! Eternal infamy light upon him who, under the pretence of pure sentimental attachment, seeks to excite an undue interest in a matron’s heart! I will never return to England till I can see you without emotion in that character; and this is the last letter which shall express a thought inconsistent with the equanimity of an affectionate relation and a sincere friend.”

HENRY POWERS COURT.

CHAP.

you or his son's wife & yes how I know  
that you are in the same place now he died  
of course. **C H A P. XVIII.**

O how canst thou renounce the boundless store  
Of charms which Nature to her vot'ry yields?  
The warbling woodland, the resounding shore,  
The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields,  
All that the genial ray of morning gilds,  
And all that echoes to the song of even,  
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,  
And all the dread magnificence of heaven,  
O how canst thou renounce, and hope to be forgiven!

BLATTIE.

**T**HE interest which the appearance and behaviour of Mr. Powerscourt had excited in Lord Monteith's mind had more permanence than the sudden emotions to which his disposition was subject commonly possessed. His evanescent impulses might generally be compared to the impression which a stone makes upon the clear surface of a glassy lake, which, after having formed a few tremulous circles, soon resumes its natural tranquillity. But on the present occasion he thought of his good-tempered rival, as he termed him, during most part of his journey to Scotland; and, as neither a whistle nor a song would always excite new ideas, he frequently expressed himself anxious to know whether the poor fellow had shot himself: "Yet I protest, my dear Geraldine," he added, "I do not laugh at him; for, upon my soul, if I were as miserable as he seems to be, I should think of nothing but driving out Cupid's arrows with a brace of bullets."

As

As lady Monteith's endeavours to divert her lord from suspecting Mr. Powerscourt's attachment had proved ineffectual, she determined, by that full confidence which Mrs. Evans had recommended, to remove every subject of self-condemnation from her own heart. After having bound his honour by a promise of secrecy, she delivered to him the letters with which I concluded the last Chapter; and she entreated him, as the affair was too serious for levity, to avoid the distressing subject in their future conversations.

Lord Monteith was a stranger to that "green-eyed monster which mocks the meat it feeds on." The preference his lady had recently given him was too avowed, and her conduct, as well as her principles, too correct to raise suspicion even in the heart of a Leontes. On the contrary, Mr. Powerscourt's behaviour excited his warm esteem; and his frank open disposition compelled him to exclaim, "I cannot think, Geraldine, " why you preferred me to that noble fellow ; " I hope he will live to come back to England, " that I may thank him for giving me happiness " at the expence of his own repose. Let me tell " you, very few young fellows of my acquaintance would have acted as he has done."

" I hope," said the countess, while heart-felt pleasure lighted up all the charms of her intelligent face, " that I shall have the satisfaction of presenting two friends to each other, highly deserving of mutual confidence! You see I have requested Henry's correspondence; you, my lord, must permit me to communicate it to you; your superior knowledge of the character of your own sex will enable me to discover whether his travels are conducive to his

" his repose, and you will assist my replies by  
" pointing out such topics as will prove most  
" effectual in promoting this end, ever remem-  
" bering that the esteem and gratitude I now  
" feel for him must be subservient to the  
" stronger attachment whence they origi-  
" nated."

Such were the sentiments of lady Monteith; and such is the conduct upon which the muse of history and the muse of fiction alike delight to dwell. The uncorrupted mind avows its divine original, by recurring with secret complacency to the portrait of what is perfect, fair, and good. Though the depravity of modern manners may obtain transient amusement from those highly-coloured scenes of guilt which the judgment condemns, the soul only finds constant gratification in contemplating the lovely pictures of innocence and virtue.

When I recollect that the subsequent events of this history will lead my narrative through many a painful scene, I seem to shrink with reluctance from the disgusting task of describing systematic villainy mining the outworks which decorum and religion have placed around female virtue, while the unsuspecting heart becomes entangled by satanic guile and inbred vanity. I feel that the part most analogous to my taste, as well as to my powers, would be to depicture the amiable features of the human character shaded only by those lighter traits of frailty from which the most perfect standard of human goodness is not exempt. But, knowing that the unchristian morals of the present age strain their affected charity till they embrace vice, while the most glaring enormities are glossed over by delicate subterfuges; and refined liberality expatiates

on

on the goodness of the heart, while its possessor breaks every precept in the decalogue; I feel stimulated by an ardent, though perhaps injudicious zeal, to lend my feeble aid to stop the torrent of enthusiastic sentiment which daringly menaces that heaven-erected edifice that is predicted to survive the wreck of worlds.

Impressed with this idea, I conceive it possible to serve the cause of principle, by showing through what devious unsuspected paths the human heart may be led to error; how easily it may, by youthful indiscretion, be hurried down the steep descent, till, Hazael-like, it sinks into the infamy which it once shuddered to name. Yet, retaining too much native purity to be reconciled to its degraded state, and too much sensibility to flise reflection, it shrinks from life as from an insupportable burden; and the morning which rose in splendor is clouded by insuperable gloom before it attains its meridian brightness.

If in the execution of this design the pencil should fail, let Candour remember the intention, and excuse the unskillful painter. Perhaps the imperfect outline may induce some superior genius, more conversant with life and manners, to execute the instructive subject with all the glowing energy that its importance requires.

I shall gratify my own taste by dwelling a little longer on that part of lady Monteith's history, when, unassailed and happy, she spread delight and comfort all around her, and her own heart derived an allowable gratification from the consciousness of deserved applause. The first four years of her married life were unembittered by restless anxiety, corroding disappointment, or the still keener pangs of self-accusation. But, lest my readers should suppose that I am now  
falsifying

satisfying my own maxims, I shall exhibit a cursory view of that period which, though it did not include any great sorrows or marked deviations from rectitude, still bore some fainter marks of the penalty of Adam.

When the young countess arrived at Monteith, she was astonished at the cruel ravages which time and negligence had made in that venerable pile. Its native magnificence, the sublime features of the adjacent scenery, every spot of which seemed by some traditional anecdote connected with her lord's family, and the attachment which the peasantry, notwithstanding their extreme wretchedness, expressed for the descendants of their old masters, kindled in her mind an agreeable enthusiasm, and she rejoiced in a distinction which seemed capable of uniting her own individual happiness with the general good. Though she continued to think that lady Madelina carried her ideas of hereditary consequence to a ridiculous extent, a generous heart would find a fair field to gratify its noblest passions in the supremacy of a wide domain. She seemed never weary of wandering through the romantic scenery. 'Here,' said she, as she one day rested on the slope of a green hill, overhung by a pine-clad precipice, 'I will build a neat little village. The houses shall all be white; there shall be a garden to each, and a residence in this agreeable spot shall be the reward conferred upon such of my lord's tenants as seem to fulfil their duties with marked propriety. I will frequently visit them; I will be their legislator, their instructor, their physician, and their friend. They shall look up to me with gratitude, and my own heart shall enjoy

• enjoy the pure recompence of conscious bene-  
• fice.'  
•

In the improvements which she planned at  
the castle, the same social and benevolent spirit  
prevailed, though here perhaps it received a more  
worldly tint from the dangerous approximation  
of vanity. 'These rooms,' said she, 'if em-  
bellished in the Gothic style, will shame the  
feeble glitter of modern frippery. Every  
article of furniture shall be massive and substi-  
tial, and convey an idea of general usefulness  
rather than a selfish desire of exhibiting the  
cold enjoyments of unimparted wealth. My  
lord's fortune is ample; I have made to it a  
considerable addition: how infinitely shall I  
prefer spending it upon this spot, which has a  
local claim to our preference, to squandering it  
in the unvarying round of a London life!  
Here, without feeling the pain of competition,  
expence may be justified by the motive of em-  
ploying industry and diffusing pleasure. I will  
cultivate the esteem of all my neighbours by  
the most winning attentions. The peculiari-  
ties which entitle me to pre-eminence shall not  
give them uneasiness, because they shall be  
uniformly exerted for their pleasure or amuse-  
ment. Here, without observation or inter-  
ruption, I may pursue my plan of influencing  
Lord Monteith's taste, till it gradually assimilates  
to my own. Lady Arabella's predilection for  
a London life, and her acknowledged influence  
over her aunt, prevent me from fearing that  
my schemes will be frustrated by the presence  
of those whom I cannot propitiate and with  
whom not to offend. Distance may, perhaps, dis-  
arm their prejudices; and when personal com-  
petition is removed, the representative of their  
family

family may receive those commendations to which kindred or friendship never can aspire.'

The plans of Lady Monteith would have proved abortive, had she not been assisted by two powerful coadjutors. Lord Monteith's natural disposition was violently disposed to the pursuit of rural sports and athletic exercises. The mountains, lakes, and forests which surrounded his castle, promised the diversions of fishing and hunting in full perfection; and the neighbouring gentry had endeavoured to enliven a thinly-inhabited country by the establishment of an assembly, a bowling meeting, and a cricket match, which returned at stated intervals. The Monteiths honoured the first-mentioned amusement with their presence very soon after their arrival at the castle; and, though the company exhibited but a miniature resemblance to the circles in which they had lately moved, they both received pleasure from the events of the evening. Two circumstances contributed to his lordship's satisfaction; he felt himself perfectly at ease; and, moreover, he received information, that the neighbouring country afforded what is termed a set of very hearty fellows, and the finest grouse and black game in the kingdom. His pleasure at this intelligence was so great, that while they returned home, he interrupted his lady's observations on the female part of the company, by declaring, that since he found things so agreeable, he really believed he shguld spend a good deal of time at Monteith. 'I think, Geraldine,' said he, 'I cannot be very dull. What do you think? I shall hunt one day, fish another, go to the bowling-green a third; then there will be a cricket match, and shooting, and public dinners,

ness, and private parties ; and then going to Edinburgh if any particular business is on foot, and making excursions through the neighbouring counties. I declare I begin to think as your father does, that it will be a very rational life, and quite as agreeable as spending all our time in those state-trappings of which Arabella is so fond. She said that I should detest Scotland in a month ; but I will convince her that I can be happy any where. Don't you think so too, my love ? You will like to live here, shall you not ?

' O ! infinitely, I assure you ; I was both surprised and pleased with the manners of several of the ladies whom I met at the assembly. They seemed indeed a little confused and reserved at first, and certainly they are unacquainted with the more refined modifications of politeness ; but many of them appeared well-informed, and I know they will improve upon acquaintance. I have projected a thousand little schemes to inspire confidence and cordiality. I am sure the dear old castle may soon be made perfectly comfortable ; and I hope, my lord, our residence among your tenants and dependents will prove an essential benefit to them.'

' I shall, certainly, order my steward to give them the preference upon every occasion which promises a lucrative advantage.'

' Is it impossible for us to extend our utility further ? Could I not endow a school, and introduce some branch of manufacture to employ the children and the women ? I am told that they are extremely uninformed, and in some respects uncivilised. I have fancied that this may be owing to the narrow stipend

of

of the presbyter, whose poverty will not permit him to exert that influence over his flock, or to pay them that attention which the interests of morality and religion require. A small addition to his stipend would not be felt by us, and would probably do more for the general improvement of manners in the neighbourhood than would be effected by a much larger expenditure any other way. I see, my lord, you smile; but allow me as well as yourself to quote my father's authority. He has frequently observed, that by enlarging Mr. Evans's sphere of usefulness, he did an act of public beneficence. "I only thought," he used to say, "of making one worthy man happy; but since Mr. Evans has been relieved from the pressure of want, he has made many men happy, aye and worthy too."

"Why there may be something in what Sir William observes, provided one could but be sure of having an Evans to deal with. But I shall have no leisure for schemes of this kind; so you may amuse yourself with them when you have no other employment. You may set up schools, portion off young girls, and enrich old divines. But, remember, no manufactures in my neighbourhood.—All our family hate the very name of them.—They only encourage a horde of idle insolent vagrants, who fly in your face upon every occasion."

"Not if care be taken to improve their morals in proportion to their affluence. You see how thinly your villages are peopled, and what extreme poverty the general appearance of the country bespeaks."

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‘ It will be very different when I spend my fortune among them. The repairs of the castle will employ the men.’

‘ But the women and children?’

‘ O they shall be fed at the castle gate.’

‘ No; let them eat the bread of industry, and enjoy those delights which the active exertion of our native energies always inspires. Sweet is the food which is earned by labour. When you, my lord, pursue health and pleasure in the fields and woods, and return home to taste the repose which is procured by exertion, and to partake of the dainties for which you are indebted to your own toil, you feel this maxim true; and your heart will exult at the idea, that your provident benevolence has extended similar enjoyments to hundreds, who must long need the protecting care of their benefactor, and consequently cannot affect an insolent independence on his bounty?’

Perhaps Lord Monteith’s principal objections to his lady’s schemes were, that he should be involved in some trouble by the execution of them. Her judicious allusion to his favourite pursuits in the preceding speech, and the prospect of the honour being wholly his, while he determined that the difficulties should be exclusively hers; these reasons, added to some secret ideas that if the plan answered it would be another triumph over the prejudices of his obstinate aunt, procured his acquiescence, and he uttered the words, ‘ You shall do as you please, only don’t tease me about it,’ just as the chariot passed over the draw-bridge which led to the castle.

## C H A P. XIX.

Say, should the philosophic mind disdain  
That good which makes each humble bosom vain?  
Let school-taught pride dissemble all it can,  
These little things are great to little man;  
And wiser he, whose sympathetic mind  
Exults in all the good of all mankind.

GOLDSMITH.

THE sang froid with which Lord Monteith always treated every scheme not immediately connected with his own pleasures, frequently communicated a severe pang to the liberal mind of the countess. Her delicacy was hurt at the gross character of his amusements, and her vanity was piqued by perceiving that the tenaciousness of long-indulged habit would not yield to the fascination of her refined accomplishments. Like Desdemona, she was "an excellent musician, and could sing the savageness out of a bear." Her mellifluous voice and sweet-toned harp still retained all their exquisite power of transfusing harmony and delight into her husband's soul, while the early horn or the convivial appointment called him from the siren in vain. But if she sought to lead his attention to the blooming wilderness of sweets planted by her hand, or the scarcely less glowing garland created by her pencil, he instantly recollects some insurmountable engagement which required every moment of his time. She was equally unfortunate if she attempted to interest

him in the history of her colony, as she termed her neat little white village ; or if, opening the stores of her capacious mind, she sought to discuss some topic of literary taste, her arguments might be brilliant, but unless they were compressed within the strictest rules of Spartan brevity, her lord was either discovering the wit of his sparring, or had fallen fast asleep.

Yet his heart was full to her merits, and his tongue so copious in her praise, that he was sometimes inclined to thrust in the agreeable subject without proper preparation. He was considered by all who visited at the castle to be a most perfect paragon of connubial merit ; and Lady Monteith was as universally pronounced to be a happy woman, with which opinion I am inclined to coincide, notwithstanding that the power of Gyges' magic ring, invariably possessed by all novel writers, has enabled me to peep behind the curtain, and to see the corroding sorrow which a prudent wife will not only conceal from public observation, but even withhold from the knowledge of her bosom friend.

My young female readers, whose notions of nuptial felicity are drawn from the delusive pages of a circulating library, will start at the harsh tenet which seems to affirm, that a great number of married ladies may assign causes for discontent of a severer nature than what sometimes affected the tranquillity of the blooming Geraldine. Fearful lest they should suppose my doctrine ambiguous, or imagine that the happiness of the lady was wholly owing to the amiable constitution of her own mind, I will very plainly tell them, that, though causes for vexation occasionally occurred, lasting unhappiness in such a situation could only proceed from a discontented,

tended, ill-regulated temper, or a perverted judgment, which, instead of forming an estimate of life as it really is, erects a fallacious standard, by which it decides upon what is due to its own defects, and how far others act as they ought. Reverse this last sentence; and let the fair scrutinizer of her husband's faults contemplate the errors of her own behaviour; let her recollect the duties she has heedlessly omitted, and the provocations she has undesignedly given; and let her then use the experience she derives from self-examination in her estimate of the conduct of her partner. After making some deductions for the stronger temptations to which the other sex are exposed by their more impetuous passions and blunter feelings, the early indulgence of their humours which their manners in early youth permit, and their hereditary notions of superiority derived from Adam's; I say, she will then, perhaps, justly reflect the apparent neglect or cruel unkindness which had just extorted her tears, "something of business, which had puddled his clear temper," and sent him home rather with an expectation of having his humours soothed by feminine softness, than of offering at the shrine of feminine susceptibility those attentions which fit the bridal state.

The feasibility of Lady Monteith's disposition prevented her from viewing the defects in her Lord with the indifference which a mind of common refinement would have experienced.—But to the qualities of refinement and sensibility, so generally fatal to female peace, Geraldine united a strong attachment to her husband, natural sweetnes of temper, and correct notions of the human character, derived from her early intimacy with Mrs. Evans.—The precepts of

that

that excellent monitor, now strengthened by conviction of their propriety, frequently recurred to her mind, prevented her from adopting the language of complaint, opened her eyes to the agreeable part of her situation, and transferred her attention to what her own duty required from her, till native complacency and habitual affection restored all the sprightly energies of her mind.

Under her presiding influence Monteith castle realized to the idea of every beholder the delightful vision of Spenser's Bower of Bliss, governed by a Una instead of an Acrasia. Magnificence was united with urbanity, hospitality was gilded by elegance, while the presiding enchantress softened her enviable superiority in beauty, wealth, wit, and talents, by the most unaffected condescension, and amiable attention to the accommodation of her guests. If her taste in drawing extorted admiration from those young ladies who were just trying to acquire the rudiments of the science, the pain of that sentiment was immediately soothed by her ready offer of furnishing them with crayons, pencils, subjects to copy superior to what the country afforded, or assistance from the master who occasionally attended her. Her tuneful voice and magic touch could not be impaired; but she had songs and music books at every one's service, and she was very willing to assist in affording all the mechanical aid which that enchanting science admires. She had acquired a knowledge of all fashionable works, and here again instruction and materials only waited to be required. Her library, her conservatory, and her hot-house attracted general attention, and transfused general pleasure, because their respective treasures were not

not kept merely to gratify the ostentation of the possessor, but were permitted to impart their mental riches and odoriferous sweets to any who wished to read a book or cultivate an off-set.—

Adhering to the rule, that beauty is best attired when robed by simple elegance, she had no temptation to be guilty of the temerity of attracting envy by the splendor of her ornament; and the expence spared from her own dress was employed in judicious presents to those of her young friends whose circumstances would ill support the cost of genteel appearance. To crown this fair assemblage of complacent graces, her exquisitely playful wit, while it dazzled by its brilliancy, prevented by its inoffensive sweetness the most irritable mind from charging it with sarcastic severity.

Her village flourished. She had named it James-town, in honour of her Lord, to whose liberality she properly referred every improvement of which she was the directing soul. The neighbouring peasantry were envious to become inhabitants of a spot which possessed so many local advantages; and a spirit of order and improvement was gradually introduced. The melancholy highlander no longer watched his few starved sheep on the bleak mountain, and for want of occupation soothed his sorrows with a bagpipe. One of his younger boys performed that office, while "he earned bread for his infants and health for himself," in shaping the green allies of Monteith, covering the bleak mountains with plantations of Scotch pine and American oak, or digging the foundations of the new buildings, which were continually added to James-town. Beside a neat edifice appropriated to divine worship, it possessed a carpet manufactory,

manufactory, a spinning room, a village school, and a market-house. Persons properly qualified were placed at the head of each institution, and the taste of the boys was to be consulted in their future destination, while the occupations of fishing, agriculture, and weaving, solicited their choice. The views of the girls were more circumscribed; but by being early taught the occupations of spinning and knitting, and by having a market opened for the sale of their productions, they were relieved from the burden of indolence, and the cheerless prospect of being a useless weight upon their future husbands, or dependants upon their caprice for every article of support. It was Lady Monteith's favourite amusement to take a morning excursion to James-town, and to introduce her female visitors to the young seminary which flourished under her care; and it frequently happened, that some yellow-haired lassie displayed sufficient abilities to induce one of the Countess's guests to transfer her from the task of singing at her wheel, to the enviable employment of clear-starching the lady's "kerchiefs;" and helping "to buskin her."

Yet even the exertions of liberal benevolence will not always afford a pure delight; the liberal mind must seek its surest reward in the conscious discharge of an acknowledged duty, and not in the perfect gratitude nor the complete satisfaction of the objects it labours to benefit.—

Though the inhabitants of James-town were selected from the most deserving part of Lord Monteith's tenants, it does not follow that they were quite exempt from the failings of humanity.—The houses were all neat and comfortable; but as the Countess had amused herself by constructing

constructing them after various models, it might happen that dame Brown would think gaffer Campbell's the more convenient, while the gaffer for a similar reason preferred that inhabited by the dame. Lady Monteith, indeed, consented to their exchanging dwellings; but then another inconvenience arose; Margery Bruce complained that a window in dame Brown's house overlooked her, and that if the said window were not walled up, she could not live; for that the dame took her station at that window, and, instead of minding her work, did nothing but watch the conduct of the aggrieved deponent. Dame Brown's rejoinder was, that Margery was suspected to be no better than she should be; that she had lately got a new plaid and kirtle, nobody knew how; and she thought it her duty to mind her goings on, lest her good lady should be impoted upon by an unworthy pretender to her favours. The fair judge found it difficult to decide in a question of such nice morality; and the more so, as the village was split into two nearly equal factions, part enlisting under the banners of the watchful Brown, and part espousing the cause of the aggrieved Margery.

Beside the perplexity which cases similar to the above often excited, Lady Monteith had to contend with other inconveniences. The power of local attachment is very strong in people who have passed their lives on one spot, without having had much intercourse with the rest of the world; and she often found that the old Highlander preferred "the hill that lifted him to the storms," to all the advantages which, while untried, his imagination annexed to the sheltered cultivated valley. The manners of the southern

strangers, whom the ornamental embellishments of Monteith had introduced among the new colony, did not assimilate with his pre-conceived ideas of submission, economy, and self-command.—Though invited to partake of the luxuries his new neighbours introduced, his affection for four-crou and crowdy was insurmountable, and his retired solitary humour shrunk from the loquacious interruptions of society. He frequently found that he had renounced pleasures congenial to his habits, for comforts which he wanted the relish to enjoy; and though respect for his gude laird and lady checked complaint, the smothered discontent often made him meet the inquiries of the latter with the sombreous brow of sorrow instead of the sunshine of joy. “Ye meant it,” he would say, “aw’ for the best, but my ain auld cot ‘was mair cumfertable.”

“Is virtue then only a name?” the contemplative Geraldine would sometimes inquire, when ruminating on the untoward events which often crossed her benevolent schemes. “I have been taught to consider the power of bellowing happiness as the most glorious prerogative which wealth could enjoy. Have the means by which I pursued this end been ill selected, or am I particularly unsuccessful in choosing fit subjects for my design? The philosophy of one-and-twenty is not remarkably profound; the views of life are then too highly coloured to admit of the “yellow leaf,” which “sober autumn” gradually introduces; and the error then prevalent even in the best-regulated minds is, that the scenes in which themselves are actors furnish exemptions to received rules as to the maxims by which they are to be governed,

or the sorrows and disappointments which they are to encounter.—Dispassionate experience would have taught Lady Monteith, that the very circumstances of the villagers' complaints argued comparative comfort. Pining poverty, deep affliction, and hopeless misery, would have adopted themes for lamentation widely different from the superior convenience of gaffer Campbell's house, the impertinence of dame Brown, the suspicious finery of Margery Bruce, or even the remembrance of sour-crust and crowdy, which haunted the "auld" Highlander. Her liberal mind would then have added to the certain satisfaction of a pure intention the exhilarating enjoyment of that moderate success to which all sublunary schemes can alone aspire; and she would have judged of the happiness of her colony, as one of our critics has observed of the sorrows of Pastoral: "That it is a sufficient recommendation of any state, when 'they have no greater miseries to deplore.' A full conviction of that depressing but infallible truth, that all the good of this world must be blended with evil, would also have preserved Lady Monteith from the mortifications to which her love of distinction and universal applause likewise exposed her. Against the traits which, in spite of repeated obligations, low envy and petty detraction sometimes aimed at her character, sweetness of temper and conscious superiority opposed an inadequate defence. Laisy Monteith's letters to her dear Lucy have contained a gentle complaint against ingratitude and the hardships of her own lot; for, though anxiously solicitous to oblige and conciliate her neighbours and acquaintance, she often found her well-meant endeavours

endeavours mistaken, or repaid by dislike and discontent.

If Miss Evans did not always feel the force of her friend's complaints, it must not be ascribed to the diminution of her affection, nor to a want of sympathy. I have already observed, that her mind was of a stronger cast; it was, beside, more intimately acquainted with real calamity.

### C H A P. XX.

When thy last breath, eve nature sunk to rest,  
Thy meek submission to thy God express'd;  
When thy last look, eve thought and feeling fled,  
A mingled gleam of hope and triumph shed.

### PLEASURES OF MEMORY.

THE reader will remember that I left Mrs. Evans struggling with the violence of a cruel disease, whose reiterated attack seemed to leave but little hope of the preservation of her valuable existence. She endured her allotted miseries with exemplary patience, and after her sufferings had almost taught her disconsolate friends to wish for her deliverance, she meekly closed a well-spent life, bequeathing the invaluable legacy of her virtues to her beloved daughter.

When lady Monteith received the painful tidings, she was in hourly expectation of her first confinement; and the utter impossibility of taking such a long journey alone prevented her from exerting her personal services to sooth her poor Lucy's sorrows. She wrote to her in the ten-  
tillish

dearest strain of affectionate condolence. ' My  
tears,' said she, ' shall ever mingle with yours  
over the sacred remains of my monstress, my  
foster-mother, my first and most valuable  
friend! Every good action I perform, every  
evil I escape, every commendable sentiment  
that rises in my heart, is owing to her. Her  
invaluable precepts, sanctioned by experience,  
now acquire restless efficacy from the painful  
reflection that her lips can repeat them no  
more. I brood over them in my memory as a  
sacred treasure. Come to me, my dearest  
Lucy; my present situation, which excludes  
strangers, demands your tender soothings, and  
will suit the privacy of your modest grief.  
Come, and tell me, while it is fresh in your  
memory, all that the dying saint said, all that  
she looked ; and arm my fortitude for the trials  
which await me, by repeating how she endured  
months of misery.'

" It was the solemn injunction of my now  
blessed mother," said Miss Evans, in her reply,  
that I should devote myself to the pious office  
of soothing the sorrows of my poor father, till  
time, uniting with religious resignation, should  
soften his griefs, divert his thoughts from one  
painful object, and enable him to occupy his  
leisure hours, once so happily filled, with other  
amusements; and she enjoined this duty as the  
noblest method of proving my affectionate  
regard for her memory. She even added,  
that she hoped her disembodied spirit might be  
permitted to witness my perseverance in a  
mode of conduct, the knowledge of which  
would perfect her beatitude.

" Is this the only way by which I can now prove  
my filial reverence to the best of mothers, and  
shall

• shall I shrink from the important charge?  
• Even your claims upon me, my dearest Ger-  
aldine, are annihilated by this superior tie.  
• You will rejoice to hear that I am successful.  
• My poor father was surprised into an agony of  
grief last Sunday. We attended divine ser-  
vice, though he could not attempt to perform  
the duty. The sight of my mother's prayer-  
book lying upon her vacant seat overpowered  
him. His stifled sobs were heard by several of  
the congregation; I knelt by his side, I pressed  
his revered hand to my lips; I seemed at that  
moment to have a perfect control over my  
own feelings; I whispered, that his only re-  
maining Lucy would endeavour to supply the  
place of her whom Providence had removed to  
a better world. My father viewed me with  
serene delight; and, as we walked home, he  
told me that I was indeed his comforter, and  
worthy of my excellent mother's bavilans.  
His praise is a cordial to my heart. While  
she lived, I thought my conduct as a daughter  
not blameable; but now that she is beyond the  
reach of my attention, I find infinite occasion  
for self-reproach. The thought that we have  
paid the last offices to a beloved obj<sup>t</sup> is in-  
conceivably painful. It turns the mind to a  
retrospective view of its past sentiments; and  
the remembrance of casual neglects and inad-  
vertent expressions is torture. If thou, my  
mother! couldst arise from thy earthly bed,  
how would thy Lucy seek to endear thy re-  
newed existence by redoubled attentions and  
more steady virtues! Pardon, thou dear saint!  
my imperfect duty; I must enjoy the thought  
that thou art present, and conscious of those  
feelings.

• sighs and tears which I generally conceal from  
• every other eye, and now am so moved.  
• Do not think, my dear Geraldine, that I  
• shall ever forget the particulars of her dying  
• moments. The awful remembrance is en-  
• graven upon my mind, and no subsequent  
• events can obliterate the impression. I will  
• describe it all to you when we meet; at that  
• time, I trust, both the hearer and the relater  
• will be more equal to the description.

• The express which has just arrived at the  
• manor-house I relieve my heart from many  
• anxieties. You are in safety, my Geraldine;  
• you were blessed with a daughter. Your use-  
• ful life is spared to your husband, your infant,  
• your father, your friends, your country. It is  
• a general, a public benefit: but let your dejected  
• Lucy lift her grateful voice amid the universal  
• joy, and adore that kind Providence which has  
• preserved her from further deprivations.

• We shall meet, my beloved friend, and I  
• trust soon. Sir William has just left us. He  
• is in raptures at this event, though a little in-  
• clined to regret that he has not a grandson.  
• It is all for the best, he says; he doubts not,  
• when he sees the pretty creature, he shall be as  
• fond of it as he was of his own Geraldine.  
• I took it a little hard, said he, that my girl did  
• not come to Powerscourt at the time prefixed;  
• but she will now bring the dear infant along  
• with her, and I shall have two pleasures instead  
• of one. one of steel would fit below  
• Dear excellent man! He has laid a scheme,  
• he says, to make us all happy together. He  
• insists that my father and I shall live with you  
• at the manor-house during the time of your  
• expected visit. He says, he can divert Mr.

Evans

‘ Evans with a hit at backgammon; and that it will do my spirits good to have a great deal of chat with you. ‘ Don’t be so cast down, my dear god-daughter,’ he continued, ‘ we are all mortal you know; and your good mother is now much happier than it was even in your power to make her.’

‘ I know you love to hear your father’s words repeated with all their genuine benevolence and simplicity. He has truly fulfilled the precept of frequenting the house of mourning. Scarcely a day has passed without his visiting us, and his kind solicitude has been attended with considerable advantage. It is scarcely possible to converse with him without feeling a portion of his tranquil spirit diffused into our own bosoms.

‘ Adieu, dear lady Monteith! How I long to see you in your matronly character, to hold your little babe in my arms, and in the contemplation of your deserved felicity to lose for a time the recollection of my own irremediable sorrows!’

Lady Monteith’s recovery was rapid, and she was soon able to introduce the young nursery to the eager expectants at Powerscourt. Her lord, though excessively anxious for her safe journey, and doatingly fond of his little moppet, would not accompany them. Busines of the greatest importance prevented him; his engagements at fishing parties, bowling meetings, and cricket matches, were so numerous, that it was absolutely impossible to break them. ‘ Take the greatest care of yourself, therefore, my dear Geraldine, till I can come and take care of you. You may depend upon it, that I shall set off to see your father at the old courtier of the Queen’s,

' Queen's', the first moment I am disengaged,  
for I cannot long be happy without you. By  
the bye I think your father unreasonable in  
insisting upon having so much of your com-

' pany.  
I pass by Mr. William's rapturous reception of  
his daughter, the unaffected transport of the  
countess, and the tears of mingled pain and  
pleasure which stole silently down Lucy's faded  
cheek. I shall not dwell upon the unaffected  
dignity with which Mr. Evans strove to prevent  
his sorrows from casting a gloom over the  
general joy, nor the repeated marks of grateful  
veneration and affection which lady Monteith  
paid to the memory of her deceased friend. We  
will suppose that, holding by her Lucy's arm,  
she visited the spot which contained the sacred  
remains of her lost mistress; that she listened  
to the interesting narrative of her sickness and  
death, and, mingling her own tears with those  
of her amiable companion, repeated the remem-  
bered precepts of the guardian of her youth,  
and enjoined upon herself the imitation of her  
virtues. The reader will recollect, that to these  
duties lady Monteith had added an additional  
bond—a promise given to the deceased, 'that  
' if her friendship could avail, her Lucy should  
' never be unhappy.'

If will also be remembered, that Mr. Powers-  
court frequently wrote to his cousin, and that  
lord Monteith was invited to overlook the corre-  
spondence. He sincerely wished Henry well;  
he would rather not have his wife make any  
man miserable; and when he contrasted his own  
character with the refinement and intelligence  
visible in his rival's letters, he felt a little awk-  
ward, and inclined to think that her cousin's  
taste

taste was more congenial to lady Monteith's than his own. All these reasons made him very desirous that Henry should break Cupid's fetters ; but since he was confident that he was a very honest fellow, and that nobody could doubt his wife's propriety, he was anxious to escape the trouble of reading the correspondence ; for Henry's letters were generally very long, and chiefly about places which he had visited in his travels ; beside, lord Monteith was always terribly incommoded by want of leisure. The countess was therefore left to her own observations, which pointed out to her that Henry's increasing vivacity augured well ; and to confirm the satisfaction which his recovered cheerfulness diffused over her mind, his last letter expressed an intention of returning to England by the route of Lower Germany, Switzerland, and Flanders.

It was the encouraging hope which these circumstances supplied, and not the stimulation of feminine curiosity, that induced lady Monteith to develope her friend's sentiments in a point that had hitherto been guarded by the most rigid secrecy. She endeavoured gradually to lead her to the subject, and began by expatiating on the beauties of Monteith. " My lord," said she, " has kindly permitted me to indulge a thousand little whimsies in embellishing a spot eminently indebted to nature. I have set up temples and alcoves out of number. Some are for solitary musings, others for social parties. There is one, of which I hope, Lucy, you will be very fond, and that we shall spend many happy hours there, when you come to stay with us next autumn. It is formed upon a plan communicated by Henry Powerscourt ; he

she took it from a beautiful ruin in Campania.  
It is open to the south, and shaded by the  
loftiest beeches I ever saw. The ivy and  
woodbines which I have planted round some  
of the columns grow very good-humouredly.  
It has besides the advantage of a prospect, to  
which even the mountain scenery of Powers-  
court is flat and uninteresting.

A crimson blush lighted up Miss Evans's face.  
"It is," said she, "extremely doubtful whether  
the state of my father's spirits will allow me  
to spend next autumn with you. But you  
mentioned Mr. Powerscourt—I hope he is well.

"When did you hear of him?"  
"Very lately," said the countess, drawing out  
one of his letters. "He writes in excellent spi-  
rits, and he gives us hopes of his soon re-  
turning to England. I hope, Lucy, you will  
meet him at Monteith."

"I meet him?" replied Lucy, in increasing  
agitation.  
"Yes, my love—I am sure you will have a  
sincere pleasure in renewing your acquaintance  
with an old friend. In this very letter he ex-  
presses a most lively concern for your loss, and  
a strong solicitude for your happiness."

"You were always a little inclined to fib,"  
replied Lucy, with a smile, which revived the idea  
of her native significant archness. "It is your  
happiness for which he feels such strong so-  
licitude?"

"Read then, and be convinced," said the  
countess, tendering her the letter.

"No," said Lucy, recollecting herself, and  
assuming a serious air; "I shall preserve the  
pertinacity ascribed to my sex, and refuse con-  
fession till you, dear tempter, tell me, what  
good

‘ good would arise from my indulging a vain hope, that I excite an interest in Mr. Powercourt’s heart. You know my secret, Geraldine; and let me for ever silence your observations on this subject, by owning that I know him. If I have not your charms to attract his affection, I have at least fortitude to avoid his contempt. His regret at losing the woman of his choice shall not be aggravated by compassion for a love-lorn girl, who, betrayed by inexperience to unsolicited love, pursues him with the offer of an unaccepted heart.’

‘ I admire your lovely pride,’ said the countess. ‘ Yet my friend’s delicacy need not be hurt when I declare, that as nothing but a press attachment would have made me insensible to Henry’s merits, it is my most earnest wish that she may reward them.’

‘ How reward them, lady Monteith? Can a forced alliance (and pity is compulsion to a noble mind) reward the generous, firm, self-denying virtues of Harry Powercourt? Shall the man who could renounce a blessing his whole soul was ardent to possess, even when by that renunciation he exposed himself to the anger of the friend he best loved, be linked to a woman who found the ties of delicacy too weak to restrain her selfish preference?’

‘ Can a lively sensibility of superior goodness efface the delicacy of your character? No, my Lucy, it gives to it a more interesting attraction. Yet I perfectly agree with you, that it ought to be kept secret from the object of your regard; for till Henry is just to your merits, even he is unworthy of you.’

‘ And is he not, in your sense of the word, unjust?’

‘ I own

‘ I own that his heart was bestowed where its value was less esteemed ; but since that attachment is now utterly at an end — ’

‘ Go on, my sweet flatterer, and say in plain terms, Now that I am married, do you, Lucy, come and meet the agreeable bachelor at Montelth; throw yourself in his way, study his humours, and try to persuade him to take a little notice of you.—No, Geraldine ; the man who has loved you will not easily be caught by other lures ; and dearly as I regard you, I shall be too jealous of my own right of pre-eminence to admit of your participation of my husband’s heart.’

‘ His return to England,’ replied the countess, ‘ is a clear proof that he can view me with indifference. Must the man who has been unfortunate in his first choice necessarily remain for ever after insensible to female merit? Surely, Lucy, that romantic idea was never inculcated by your mother’s precepts.’

‘ Such a change is not absolutely impossible ; but highly improbable in the present instance. Observe the line of conduct which I mean readily to pursue ; and I conjure you by our friendship, and your wishes for my happiness, do not attempt to make me deviate from it. I shall in the first place persist in my endeavours to conquer a preference which promises to be always irreconcilable with my peace ; and as a means to forward this desirable end, neither in your letters nor your conversation do you, my Geraldine, introduce the painful theme. I will neither avoid nor seek Mr. Powercourt ; I will neither appear anxious to please, nor fearful to offend him. Whatever progress I make in his affections shall be all in my own natural

• natural character. Do you exert your penetration, and warn me when I depart from this line of conduct. Be as jealous of my delicacy as you would of your own; and if ever my countenance betray in his presence the perturbation of my mind, warn me of the danger of exciting my own future remorse; and let me hasten back to hide my folly in this solitude, where my mind shall soon regain its lost energy by the contemplation of my mother's virtues?

She then presented lady Monteith with a copy of verses. "Read," said she, "this little tribute to filial duty, which burst from my heart during my lonely walk last night. It is not finished, but it will convince you that I am capable of more worthy feelings than the weak regrets of unrequited love." So saying, she suddenly left the countess, who with mingled admiration and regret perused the following fragment:

Still will I wander through these moss-grown bowers,  
And scent the grateful fragrance of these flowers;  
Still will I pace the path her footsteps press'd,  
Still watch the favour'd plants her culture bless'd;  
While the loud thrush warbling fills the grove,  
Mix'd with the murmurs of the melting dove.

Here, when the sun's declining car allows  
A deeper shade to hover o'er the boughs,  
Sweet Philomel, who shunn'd the "garish day,"  
Awakes th' enamour'd echoes with her lay;  
O Bird! best darling of the house, again  
Pour on my pensive ear that thrilling strain;  
Again repeat it!—Fancy shall prolong  
Thy notes, and give expression to thy song;

Tell

Tell what deep swells describe parental woe,  
For sever'd love what softer descants flow; —  
Sing on—the tender sympathy I feel,  
For, as around me night's dun shadows steal,  
Keen retrospection every sense employs,  
And gives a substance to departed joys.  
I see thy form, my honour'd mother! glide  
Wrapt in a filmy mist, and scarce descried;  
I turn delighted, and again rejoice  
In the known cadence of thy silver voice.  
O'er ever lov'd, rever'd, lamented, say,  
From what far region hast thou wing'd thy way?  
Charg'd with what kind injunction art thou come  
To turn my footsteps from the path-worn tomb?  
Appear'st thou in displeasure, to upbraid  
Some broken promise, or some right unpaid;  
Or hast thou journey'd to this dark terrene  
To tell the secrets of the world unseen? —  
'Tis silence all—Light zephyrs wave the trees,—  
'Twas but the glancing boughs, and rising breeze;  
The faint impression fades upon my brain,  
The vision closes, but my griefs remain!

C H A P.

ebtis iedro vissi n' ob' vissi hett' apollavirash  
hsinobz'ed esmimol vsm ait' alshib te  
ti usd' ners iud' zedcioring eva'ler noqu' iot  
emest' j' CHAP. XXI. uwo dor zosb  
v'li' horiogib lo vissi q' iu' scivis iu' scivis  
blan' s'li' v'li' v'li' v'li' v'li' v'li' v'li' v'li' v'li'

Still to ourselves in every place confin'd,  
Our own felicity we make or find:  
With secret course, while no loud storms annoy,  
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy.  
**GOLDSMITH.**

AMONG the various means employed by Providence to soften human calamity, none are more eminently beneficial than the opiates which time administers to grief. It was finely observed by a novelist (not one of the present school), that none but the guilty are long and completely miserable. In vain does the soul, while labouring under the strong paroxysms of calamity or disappointment, renounce all acquaintance with terrestrial pleasures, and, like the Hebrew patriarch, resolve to ‘go down to the grave mourning.’ Time will soften the poignancy of regret; a Benjamin may arise to divert affection from the grave of Joseph, and the tears of anguish may be converted to those of joy. This supposition, however, premises that the grief did not originate in the depravity of the sufferer. Intervening years may render vice callous or penitent; but the impenetrability of one state, and the apprehensiveness of the other, are alike irreconcilable with the idea of happiness. It has been long acknowledged, that, though the loss of a beloved friend seems at first the most insupportable of all calamities, even affectionate minds sooner acquiesce in such deprivations,

deprivations, than they do in many other kinds of distress. This may sometimes be accounted for upon religious principles; but even when it does not own such exalted motives, it seems severe to ascribe it to levity of disposition. Existing in the midst of a dying world, we should rather employ our faculties in extracting improvement from scenes of mortality, than waste them in unavailing regret. The bond of friendship is not, indeed, dissolved by death; yet it does not impose incessant woe on the survivor, who must soon journey through the same dark valley which the lamented object has just explored.

Strengthened by such considerations, still further enforced by the precepts and example of her father, Miss Evans's grief gradually subsided into the tranquil cheerfulness which naturally belonged to her character. Her affection for her mother shewed itself in a tender attachment to her memory, and to every subject connected with it; in a steady imitation of her virtues, and a faithful observance of her precepts. The high heroic tone of her mind would have been wounded by a supposition, that love was more invulnerable than filial grief; and she certainly so far subdued her early preference, as to render it very little troublesome either to herself or her friends. It did not incapacitate her for any duties, nor did it absorb any of her agreeable properties. She visited Monteith in a few months after her mother's death, and delighted all who saw her with her good sense and agreeable vivacity. She even met Mr. Powerscourt without betraying her secret emotion to the most scrutinizing eye. She received him without either discovering strong transport or

adopting an artificial reserve : and she bade him adieu with a voice so little tremulous, that even Lady Monteith could scarcely detect her latent emotion.

It may be for the advantage of all love sick young ladies, who sit under woodbine bowers or shady beeches, or who walk by moonlight to hear nightingales and waterfalls, to learn by what means Miss Evans was enabled to make so respectable a defence against the purblind archer. In the first place, she was constantly employed ; in the second, she never indulged in the dangerous pleasure of dwelling on the name and merits of her beloved, either in her conversation or in her letters, nor did she ever allow herself to complain of her hard lot. To prevent such repinings, she often visited the abodes of real misery, and her attention was directed to that course of study which is the reverse of sentimental refinement.

Mr. Powerscourt's short residence at Monteith did not indicate a revival of that strong attachment to his lovely cousin which had given him so much unhappiness. He had found absence a grand specific. Change of scene, and interesting objects of pursuit, had counteracted the effect of love upon a mind, which, though naturally calm and contemplative, was remarkably susceptible of deep impressions, and addicted to a pensive cast of thought. He had derived still further advantages from his travels. His capacious understanding was eminently disposed to receive all the improvement which an extensive view of men and things could afford. Habits of society wore off his natural reserve ; and, as his youthful awkwardness was owing to uncommon diffidence, the same circumstances which inspired a modest consciousness in his own

own powers, gave grace to his person and elegance to his address. Thus improved, Miss Evans might have found her determined stoicism an ineffectual defence, if it had been long exposed to so powerful an assailant. It may, on the other hand, be asked, if Miss Evans's merit was not equally calculated to convince Henry, that female attractions may fascinate in more than one form. I readily assent to the suggestion; but the presence of Lady Monteith did not admit the fair display of Lucy's powers; and that young lady contributed to her own defeat, by continually suspecting that her friend led the discourse to such a topic purposely to call her out, and that such or such an amusement was projected with a design to leave her tête-à-tête with M.. Powerscourt. Her indignation at these ideas was so warm, that instead of being peculiarly brilliant, her determination to avoid being singular could not prevent her from being uncommonly reserved.

Henry, on the other hand, conscious of the fragility of new-formed resolutions, was prevented from attending to the attractions of Miss Evans by a scrupulous watchfulness over his own heart, lest it should deviate from those limits which he had prescribed, in order to prevent Lady Monteith from occupying more of his thoughts than common admiration justified. He found, upon this visit, that her wit and beauty were her least attractions. As a wife, as a mother, how admirable!—how enchanting as the presiding directress of a large family!—how intelligent in her pleasures!—how prudent in her benevolence! Lord Monteith was uncommonly attentive to him, and shewed a strong desire to contract a friendly intimacy. He

talked of the pleasures of the chace, of the agreeable society of many gay careless souls with whom he spent several happy hours. Good heavens! could the husband of Geraldine relish such low amusements, and be unworthy of her? This thought kept Henry awake one whole night, and the next morning he determined to set off on a tour to the Hebrides. Lord Monteith earnestly pressed him to take his castle in his return, and tempted him by offering to introduce him to a party who proposed spending a month in hunting the red deer among the Grampian hills. Mr. Powerscourt determined to avoid every opportunity of drawing comparisons dangerous to his integrity, and proposed going to Ireland in his way back, with an intention of paying a long-intended visit to a particular friend.

The attachment of the Monteiths to their northern residence seemed to increase. My lord was sometimes reluctantly forced by the unavoidable pressure of parliamentary business to visit London, and the countess generally embraced that opportunity of paying her duty at Powerscourt. She once accompanied her lord to London, where lady Arabella, who was still aspiring to the character of a first-rate toast, was terrified at the appearance of rivalry with which the undiminished charms of her lovely sister threatened her, even in her own domain. Probably this visit would have proved fatal to all the fond terms of affection which lady Arabella's letters had constantly expressed, had not family harmony been preserved by the alarming illness of Lady Monteith's eldest daughter, who was left in Scotland, which summoned the affrighted mother from the haunts of pleasure to

the bed of pain. The child soon recovered under her watchful eye, and, though not insensible to the blandishments of adulation and the seductions of pleasure, the grateful heart of Geraldine forgot the disappointment of losing the promised amusement in the transporting idea of the restoration of her darling. She was by this time the mother of three daughters, all promising and lovely. The repeated disappointment of having male issue somewhat disconcerted her lord, yet the chagrin was not so predominant as to cause any diminution in his attachment to his lady. Experience taught him that her unvaried sweetness was necessary to his happiness; and it never occurred to him, that his peculiar pleasures and pursuits were any impediments to her's. With too little reflection even to attend to his own defects, and too little judgment to appreciate Geraldine's refined excellence, he gave an unqualified assent to the assertions of his acquaintance, and believed himself not only a very happy, but also a very excellent husband: and who among the lords of the creation will controvert that opinion, when they hear that his lady never contradicted him, and never found fault?

I shall leave to the sentimental part of my readers the task of commenting on the selfishness and inelegance of Lord Monteith's character; for, doubtless, they have long ago observed, that his mind was cast in too gross a mould to form the proper counterpart of Geraldine's; and I am ready to allow, that the dissimilarity must be fatal to that pure felicity, the result of a perfect congeniality in taste and sentiment, which is always the reward of heroes.

roes and heroines, and is sometimes realised on the stage of life. Such marked disproportion affords an unanswerable argument to dissuade a young lady of strong feeling from accepting an otherwise unexceptionable offer; but since no law, either human or divine, permits it to dissolve the marriage bond, it cannot be urged as an excuse for married wretchedness, unless some moral defect or painful peculiarity in temper be superadded. Sensibility may wish that the stock of mutual happiness may receive every agreeable addition; but judgment will look abroad, and, estimating its own real situation by adverting to the lot of others, will find reasons for content, particularly if humility whisper somewhat of its own conscious deficiencies. I speak of general wretchedness, not of a momentary pang; of a confirmed train of thinking, not of a sudden reflection which reason examines and rejects.

Long before the period of which I am now treating, Lady Monteith had abandoned the impracticable scheme of arraying Acteon in the vestments of Apollo. The discovery was painful to her vanity, which had taught her credulity to believe, that love and beauty are the true alchymists that can transmute the basest metals into the purest gold. But the sanguine hopes of youth do not sink under one disappointment. Her lord possessed many good qualities, and the uncontrolled power which he gave her over his fortune allowed her to execute every scheme that her liberality suggested, and pursue her own taste in its fullest extent, provided she spared him the irksome task of being obliged to pay attention to her plans. As to any idea of being impeded in the execution of his own, the yielding

ing gentleness of Lady Monteith preserved her from making the mad attempt, which could only have been compared to "drinking up Eisel, or eating a crocodile."

If the suggestions of latent pride, or, to call it by its softer name, conscious superiority, sometimes led her to think that she might have made a more congenial choice, returning tenderness bade her start from the injurious suggestion, and fly to her colony or her plantations, which, presenting the idea of her lord's indulgence, never failed to inspire complacency. The future was an ample field for hope, and she filled it with the most agreeable images. She determined, by strictly attending to the education of her daughters, to bend their ductile minds to such pursuits as would enable her to find those colloquial pleasures in her maternal character, which had been withheld from her connubial portion.

Her thoughts were sometimes diverted from her favourite employment of framing such a plan of education as should insure success, to the contemplation of her Lucy's approaching happiness, which every day rendered more probable. Henry now generally resided at Powerscourt. His filial attentions and agreeable manners enlivened Sir William's declining years; and his frequent opportunities of observing Miss Evans convinced the countess that her beloved friend would gradually make the conquest so important to her repose, in the manner which her strict sense of delicacy and propriety required.

Bending under the enfeebling load of time, but still tranquil, social, and benevolent, the visits of his beloved daughter seemed to renew

Sir

Sir William Powerscourt's frail existence. Her countenance always bespoke happiness, and he forgave the negligent inadvertencies visible in Lord Monteith's behaviour to himself. "Old men and young lords," said he, "can't be expected to suit one another; but he is kind to my child, and that is sufficient."

I have now described those scenes of Lady Monteith's life, in which, judging by the proper estimate of terrestrial good, she might be termed innocent and happy. An artful seducer combining with her master-passion reversed the pleasing prospects, and produced scenes which the following pages will develope. While I prosecute my arduous, and perhaps unpopular task, I rely on the lenity of those who sincerely regret the alarming relaxation of principle that too surely discriminates a declining age; and I anticipate the candid allowances which they will make for any incidental defects in a well-meant endeavour to point out the tendency of several opinions now too generally diffused through every rank in society.

C H A P.

**A TALE OF THE TIMES.** W 201

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When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand,  
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand?  
With varying vanities, from every part,  
They shift the moving toyshop of their heart;  
Where wigs with wigs, with swordknots swordknots  
strive,

Beaus banish beaus, and coaches coaches drive.

POPE.

**W**HILE Lady Monteith exerted all the powers of her mind to enjoy fame and to diffuse happiness, and her beloved Lucy Evans pursued the humbler but surer path of conscientiously endeavouring to discharge her duty to God and man, Lady Arabella Macdonald, already embarked on the sea of gaiety and dissipation, applied all her thoughts to the attainment of two doubtful blessings, a husband and a coronet.

Disinterested love is always a very favourite topic with youth and beauty. After a fly observation, that pretty little Geraldine might owe some attractions to Powerscourt manor, she entreated that her aunt would cautiously suppress the communication of her intended liberality; and, by hinting that jointures always reverted to the family from which they were granted, leave her to depend upon her own radiant eyes for procuring a splendid establishment. Oroondates himself must feel some increase of rapture, if, while his bride curtesied to him after the per-

formance of the marriage ceremony, she at the same time whispered to him, that she was the acknowledged heiress of four thousand a year. But if Lady Arabella's husband had any spark of Oroondates' gallantry, his rapture would solely result from the delicate reserve of the lady, and he would undoubtedly reply, "Wealth cannot add to the transport I feel in calling you mine. Employ the gaudy toys you mention in whatever way you please; they will be no other-wise welcome to me, than as they promote your satisfaction; for your heart is the only treasure which I wish to retain."

In ages of very remote antiquity lovers might talk in this style; but as all authentic memorials of these periods are unhappily lost, sceptics are inclined to doubt the actual existence of such very disinterested heroism. Poor Lady Arabella found that the swains who flourished in the close of the eighteenth century were of a very different order of beings. Perceiving that the first London winter produced more starers than adorers, she set out for Bath. Here Cupid in vain continued to shoot his arrows from her eyes; the apathy of dissipation, more invulnerable than the shield of Minerva, defended the intended victims.—Idleness is said to be the mother of Love; but not the idleness of public places. The lounging beaus, as they sauntered arm in arm along the rooms, occasionally cheered her spirits with a passing "How d'ye do," and then joined in protesting, "that she was an immense fine girl, and that it was a shame her father had not left her a fortune." The conversation generally concluded with a laugh at the repulsive state of Lady Madelina, which nobody seemed willing to infringe.

Lady

Lady Arabella now determined to try the effect of rural scenes; and, having chosen the then fashionable retirement of Brighton as the probable residence of the vagrant loves, she persuaded Lady Madelina, who went to Bath to fix a flying gout, that her complaint was certainly scorbutic, for which sea-bathing was the only specific; and there at last the expected lover appeared in the form of Sir Phelim O'Connaught, a very personable and very assiduous Irish gentleman of good family, and unquestionable honour. Though Lady Arabella had protested that she never would surrender to anything beneath a coronet, Sir Phelim's addresses were so perfectly rhapsodical, that her heart seemed to flutter, when at this critical period its tranquillity was re-established by the appearance of some very ungenteel company,—I mean, a couple of sheriff's officers. Sir Phelim was so shocked at the audacity of such low villains intruding upon the haunts of gentlemen, that he was never seen abroad after their arrival. It afterwards appeared, that his attachment was not so perfectly disinterested as had been supposed; for that he had acquired some knowledge of the disposal of Lady Madelina's jointure.

Lady Arabella joined in the laugh against her quondam adorer, and declared, that though certainly he was very specious, she had found him out in an instant, and was determined to divert herself with the fellow's ridiculous ways. She also added, that this was another proof how prudent it was in ladies of fortune to conceal their expectations, for *avowed* wealth was always exposed to degrading solicitations.

The

The winter campaign opened with eclat.— A noble Earl, whose affairs were a little deranged, laid siege in form, and the contest seemed to predict a happy issue, had not Lady Madelina put the young general prematurely to the rout by inquiring after his rent-roll. Poor Arabella felt a little piqued; but no matter;— these were her happiest days; she loved liberty, detested restraint, and danced, laughed, and visited more than ever.

The defection of the noble Earl was repaired by the attendance of two admirers, a Viscount and a private gentleman, who started in the career of honourable love at the same instant.— Hitherto her ladyship had been rather unfortunate in the character of her adorers; but her indecision in the present instance proved that she was actuated by motives widely different from the desire of connubial happiness. Lord Fitzof-borne was an emaciated victim to licentious pursuits; Mr. Stanley was a youth of great promise, educated under the auspices of a worthy father. The aim of the former was to repair his shattered fortune, and to gratify his selfish vanity by exhibiting to the world a fine young woman in the character of his wife. The latter sought domestic tranquillity: the beauty of Lady Arabella had caught his eye; her reported expectations far exceeded what his father would require in pecuniary affairs; and, supposing that a young woman must imbibe every virtue under the auspices of a person of Lady Madelina's strict decorum, he called her levity innocent gaiety, her affectation, sprightliness of manner; and, sincerely worshipping the image he had set up, he ardently solicited his charmer's heart.— Though my discoveries have enabled my sagacious

ous readers to conclude, that the unfortunate Stanley was in pursuit of a non-entity, an impassioned lover could not perceive that nothing but the adverse weight of a coronet prevented the nodding scale from preponderating in his favour. True to the first object of her youthful desires, even the unworthiness of the giver could not in her idea invalidate the gift. But the progress of my history now calls me from the portraiture of fashionable love to the definition of polite friendship.

Though Lady Arabella had very little of the sentimental in her character, she enjoyed the blessing of a bosom friend. Her acquaintance with Miss Campley commenced at her first arrival in London. They dressed in the same uniform, went to the same parties, laughed at the same quizzes, and flirted with the same beaus. But Miss Campley being the uncontrolled mistress of her own actions, soared to a character which some restrictions of Lady Madelina's prevented her niece from adopting ; I mean, that of a dasher. She drove four in hand, laid wagers, ran in debt, played at Pharo, and, though infinitely inferior to her friend in beauty, certainly laid claim to greater taste and spirit.

As the ladies had never interfered in each other's conquests, their friendship was fixed as adamant. To own the truth, conquest and Harriet Campley were no longer synonymous terms. The gentlemen had long been more desirous of winning her money than her heart ; and even few knight-errants would have possessed sufficient courage and disinterested generosity, to rescue a distressed damsel from the harpy

harpy talons of the law at the risk of their own certain ruin.

As the prospect of a splendid establishment became less probable, Miss Campley's creditors were more clamorous ; and, though she professed herself highly delighted with the expected eclat of an execution, her haggard countenance betrayed an agonized mind. The period of Lady Arabella's double triumph proved the crisis of her fate ; and the unexpected death of an only brother changed her prospects from the gloom of a prison to pleasure and affluence.

Lord Fitzosborne had known Miss Campley from her earliest youth ; he had often been at her parties, and had won her money without wishing for a further connexion ; but she now struck him in a much more interesting point of view. I do not mean to insinuate, that he thought her mourning was particularly becoming, and suited to her complexion ; his lordship's taste led him to pursue more solid advantages than a set of features can promise. He was an excellent calculator ; and, though he too well understood the character of his present mistress, to fear the ultimate success of his rival, he laid so much stress upon the attractions of old dowagers, and the frailty of vows of widowhood, that he considered three thousand a year in immediate possession as better than four thousand in reversion. But while he continued rather unresolved, the gout fixed in lady Madeline's foot, and her physician congratulated her upon an event which would infallibly add at least twenty years to her life. His lordship waited for no other inducement to pay his devoirs at the shrine of the other divinity. Miss Campley's yielding gentleness forgave past slights ; and

in less than a month lady Arabella received bride-cake and favours from the viscountess Fitzosborne.

This certainly was provoking ; but the faithful Stanley was a sure resource. Here again lady Arabella's evil genius met her to blast her projects. Mr. Stanley was not quite so much in love as to lose all his powers of observation. His charmer's conduct had been at least doubtful. The encouraging smiles which had beamed full upon him ever since the viscount's dereliction, were too suspicious to be completely fascinating ; and he thought a journey into the country would at least show his mistress, that he was not one of Cupid's tame votaries. In his take-leave visit he made some further discoveries into her ladyship's character ; and while he made his final bow, his regret at his disappointment was softened by the consciousness of escaping that worst of evils, a dissipated unprincipled wife.

Lady Arabella had charming spirits. She laughed at the vanity of the men, creatures who supposed themselves of consequence ; and, intimating that though she had private reasons for rejecting Lord Fitzosborne, they were not of a nature to influence her dearest Harriet's choice, she waited with impatience for the return of the bride and bridegroom to town. She flew to make the wedding visit, gave in her card, was admitted, and congratulated the happy pair in terms equally sincere with the professions of esteem and friendship which she received in return. The viscountess now insisted that she should be her constant visitor, and strongly urged her not to mope herself at home during her aunt's confinement. Lady Arabella declared, that her ladyship was the only good Christian

that

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that she had talked to for a long time ; and that it really would be charity to take her out of the sphere of flannels and fermentations. They agreed to go to every place where there was any thing to be seen. Lady Fitzosborne declared with a smile, that even if her lord were sometimes of the party she had a soul too capacious for jealousy ; and her equally liberal friend, with a loud laugh, observed, that she was not yet arrived at the age of envy and her last prayers. Lady Fitzosborne's speech needs no explanation ; but the wit of lady Arabella's retort consisted in an allusion to the circumstance of her dear friend's being ten years older than herself.

The friends were constantly together, except when the mysteries of Pharo imposed a temporary separation. I have already said, that lady Madelina's severe notions restricted some of her niece's propensities ; but this was not the only thing that prevented Arabella from being caught in that ruinous vortex from whose fatal contact peace and honour must never hope to escape. Lord Fitzosborne was, since his marriage, become a man of character, a lover of decorum, and a considerable observer of pecuniary advantages. Fortune seldom bestows her gifts singly ; and, since her accession to her brother's estate, his lady had an amazing run of luck. She was not only able to discharge her own debts of honour, but to pay some of his ; and this was the only circumstance which could at all reconcile his notions of propriety with her infraction of the laws of her country. His thoughts were now turned to the advantageous establishment of his brother Edward Fitzosborne, who had resided many years abroad upon the limited portion of a younger son. His lordship had been assured by many

many respectable travellers, that this young gentleman was an honour to his name, possessed of elegant manners, uncommon erudition, and an irreproachable character; that he appeared in the first circles, corresponded with the first literary characters of the age, and was fitted to move in the most exalted sphere. The noble viscount's fraternal tenderness yearned at the recital. He determined to send for him to England, to get him into parliament, to push him in the world, and to marry him to a fortune. It was with a reference to this design that he prohibited the viscountess from initiating her friend in her private mysteries.

Mr. Fitzosborne received his brother's summons to England with regret, and begged that he might be permitted to remain at Paris, where he was just then contemplating the sublime spectacle of a great nation emancipating itself from the fetters of tyranny and superstition. It was, he said, his wish to continue abroad, to watch the progress of events that would enlarge his mind, and render him still worthier of the office of a British legislator. The peer, whose ideas were equally liberal, granted the request; and, depending upon his own watchfulness, and the chicanery of his lady, to prevent the glittering gold-fish that he wished to entrap from escaping their net, he permitted Mr. Fitzosborne to prosecute his studies, till the coercive measures which democracy was compelled to adopt obliged even the lovers of freedom to take shelter in the legal despotism of Old England.

## C H A P. XXIII.

— 'Tis not impossible  
 But one, the wicked'st caitiff on the ground,  
 May seem as shy, as grave, as just, as absolute,  
 As Angelo ; even so may Angelo  
 In all his dressings, characts, titles, forms,  
 Be an arch villain.

SHAKESPEARE.

LADY ARABELLA was with her dear Harriet when Mr. Fitzosborne unexpectedly arrived. He had narrowly escaped the guillotine, had passed the sea in a fishing-boat, and had encountered so many perils, that his admiration of that meretricious liberty whose distinguishing code is equality of wretchedness, was rather abated. " Hair-breadth 'scapes" are very interesting to most ladies, and Mr. Fitzosborne's powers of recitation were unrivalled. His person had every charm, his manner every advantage. Lady Arabella looked, listened, admired, and went home vastly rejoiced, that such a delightful young man had escaped the odious democrats.

The next morning, at an early hour, lady Fitzosborne rushed into her friend's dressing-room. " Enchanting news ! my dearest Bella," said she ; " we shall never more be distressed for want of a *cicisbeo*. My lord has asked Edward to live with us till he forms an establishment of his own. Is not he a divine fellow ? And this morning he looks more resistless than ever.

' ever. Such spirit ! such information ! It would have been a shame to have had him confounded with a parcel of emigrant desperadoes. He spoke very fine things of you, my dear ; he seems quite struck, I assure you. If you were but a little more Greek in your drapery, he declared, you would have put him in mind of La Liberté on the day of deification, who was the handsomest courtesan in all Paris.

' But, bless me !' continued the British peeress, looking at her watch, ' how I trifle. I vow I have fifty visits to make this morning. Good bye ! I shall call upon you for the opera this evening. I long to show Edward the new house. O, I declare I have not had the humanity to inquire after aunty ; but I can't stay to hear now. You'll tell me to-night all the process of the foot, and the doctor. Sparkle, my love : Edward is amazingly fond of wit.'

Pity is said to be near akin to Love : and when blended with admiration, and inspired by the idea of awakening reciprocal sentiments in the bosom of another, it may certainly be styled the parent of the soft infatuation. Though philosophy was Mr. Fitzosborne's chief forte, he did not belong to the school of Diogenes. One prime article in his creed was, that an adept did not study to less advantage for possessing the good things of this life. Indeed, as his views were not very clear on the subject of a future state, he considered it to be his bounden duty to embrace all the advantages which the present afforded. Gentlemen of his principles do not mean by their general declamations in favour of liberality, honour, and philosophical equanimity,

to

to convey the precise idea, that such qualities are indispensably requisite in their own characters: for they know, that the exterior resemblance exactly answers the same end. Superficial observers (and the major part of mankind belong to this class) will give you credit for possessing a virtue, provided you are loud in your censures of an opposite vice. Good notions of public liberty give the licence which permits you to be a private tyrant. The daring atheist and sophisticating sceptic may alike shelter under the veil of religious moderation: and provided the words honour, sentiment, and philanthropy be upon your tongue, you may disturb the repose of mankind, either individually or collectively, with impunity.

To illustrate the analogy in the present instance: Could the enlarged soul of Edward Fitzosborne have heard the shameful tale of mercenary indigence concealing disgust under the mask of admiration to entrap the wealth of inanity into a degrading connexion, without expressing the most generous emotion? How would his strong feelings have revolted at the sight of those sordid shackles which militated against the natural liberty of man, and the idea of that *confirmed habit* of dissimulation which annihilated his supposed inherent perfection. He could certainly have been very eloquent upon these themes, if they referred to the conduct of a methodist or a formalist; but when applied to his own concerns it was soon adjusted. The girl wanted a husband, the gentleman a fortune; the balance, therefore, was as nicely trimmed as the most equalizing spirit could desire. This consideration might have been further useful, as it necessarily dissolved all ties of gratitude; but

Mr.

Mr. Fitzosborne had long before discovered, that private gratitude is inconsistent with public virtue.

Lady Arabella had no doubt that her wit and beauty held out sufficient attractions to a gentleman so professedly disinterested as her new admirer (for he assumed that character in a few days); and she did not even attempt to misconstrue his behaviour, or to disguise the pleasure which she received from his addresses. Fitzosborne was not a sensualist. Beauty was to him a mere abstract quality, particularly when associated to the idea of a wife. He had been too long accustomed to the coruscations of real genius, to bestow more than a languid smile on lady Arabella's jejune *bons mots*. Even that languid smile was soon converted into saturnine silence. Her character was too superficial even to interest his attention. He discovered her foibles, detected her artifices, and despised her understanding, in the first month of his courtship. She was too easy a conquest for his ambition; and nothing but the reluctance which he felt at the thought of being dependent upon his brother could have reconciled him to the idea of an alliance.

Pereceiving her heart irredeemably entralled, (though in this opinion he was somewhat duped by his own vanity,) he began to act the preconcerted part. He was now no longer the assiduous lover, but the man of firm honour and inviolable integrity, incapable of betraying unsuspecting innocence, or of seducing a young lady from the duty which she owed to the protecting kindness of a venerable relation. Lady Arabella unwarily acknowledged, that her aunt was inclined to suspect a mercenary motive for his

his addresses, and this drew from him an exordium on the purity and disinterestedness of his attachment, with a declaration, that though it would glow in his breast with unabated fervour, yet he had rather perish the untimely victim of despair, than justify lady Madelina's sentiments by a departure from that strict honour which had ever been the ruling principle of his life.

' No ! lady Arabella,' continued he, while the astonished lady was incapable of interrupting him, ' the enlightened mind needs no other incentive than conscious rectitude to enable it always to act as it ought. I can support penury, exile, or even the loss of you ; but I cannot support disgrace. Lady Madelina has injured me by her unjust suspicions. She has cruelly striven to infuse her own narrow prejudices into a mind which I hoped was incapable of an illiberal doubt. How can I be sure that she has not succeeded ? Your eyes, your manner, evince less confidence than they were wont : and my alarmed heart anticipates the gloomy period, when reserve and suspicion shall chill the sentiments of pure, ingenuous, disinterested love. Sooner than such mischiefs shall fall upon me, I will resign you, madam, and even at this moment tear myself from you for ever.'

' I cannot see for what reason,' returned the lady, whom this vehement oratory had driven from her usual resource of playing with her fan or adjusting her dress ; ' I declare, Mr. Fitz-osborne, I can't bear to hear you talk so.' If the declamation of the gentleman was pathetic, the silence of the lady was no less so ; for it proceeded from a flood of tears.

After

After a few forced compliments to this trait of feeling, Edward resumed the discourse on the subject of the claims of duty, which were, he said, often incompatible with those of the heart. In the conclusion he seemed a little softened on the harsh subject of eternal separation: but then lady Madelina must come forward, unsay her former cruel aspersions, and with her own hand lead her niece to the altar.

Reveal then, ye immortal Muses! who inspire great designs, what means achieved the glorious task of subjugating lady Madelina's narrow suspicions, and restoring to her mind the beautiful simplicity of nature. Neither the resplendent character nor the exalted birth of a Fitzosborne could have gained the arduous victory, if powers supernal had not intervened. First, Venus, queen of gentle devices! taught her prototype, lady Arabella, the use of feigned sighs, artificial tears, and studied faintings: while Esculapius descended from Olympus, and, assuming the form of a smart physician, stepped out of an elegant chariot, and on viewing the patient, after three sagacious nods, whispered to the trembling aunt, that the young lady's disorder, being purely mental, was beyond the power of the healing art. Reduced to the dire alternative of resigning the fair sufferer to a husband or to the grave, the relenting lady Madelina did not long hesitate. The resentment of injured honour was appeased by expressions which more nearly resembled concessions than any that her ladyship had ever uttered; and Arabella soon appeared again in public with very little diminution of her charms, notwithstanding her late alarming illness.

It

It must now be observed, that Mr. Fitzosborne was entirely passive through the whole of this affair. Young ladies are apt to mistake general politeness for significant attentions, and gentlemen are not blamable for the tender-like susceptibility of their hearts. As soon as lady Arabella's preference was visible, she became more reserved in his conduct, as all his friends could witness. Nay, he had even gone so far as to recall to her mind those principles of action, which he gloried in avowing to be the acknowledged energies of his soul. Her unhappy pre-dilection silenced his observations. What then! could he be blamed, or ought he to have suppressed that flow of liberal benevolence which a full heart prompted him to pour forth, and which undoubtedly captivated the amiable fair one? Recollecting the motives which an illiberal world might assign to his behaviour, he believed he ought to have done so, but it was now too late. The public knew the rest. He trusted that the lady had sufficiently consulted her own happiness to study the peculiarities of his character. It was above disguise and abhorrent of restriction. If she had been mistaken, he deplored the consequences. But as the strong characteristics of nature were engraven on his mind with indelible force, he could not be expected to change.

The classical embellishments of the heroic ages gave infinite advantages to descriptive narrations, to which the cold copyist of modern manners can never aspire. How animating is the personification of winged loves, and choral graces, white-armed nymphs strewing flowers, and sportive fawns chanting an epithalamium, Juno on her radiant car, and Hymen in his saffron mantle!

mantle ! What can the brightest imagination do with such uncouth figures as lawyers in tie-wigs, with their green bags and parchments, or even a little painted French milliner with her bandbox ? The British like the Grecian bride offers sacrifices, but not to the deities of Complacence and nuptial Harmony—Her devoirs are too frequently directed to the shrine of Fashion and Vanity ; and the merits of the villa, the town-house, the jewels, and the nuptial paraphernalia are discussed with all imaginable scrupulosity, while the lover's character is overlooked. He on the other hand is too busy in balancing the chances of the lady's fortune against her father's demand of settlement, and the possibility of privately clearing off his most pressing incumbrances, to consider his destined wife in any other light than as a necessary appendage, which entitles him to take possession.

Every scheme preparatory to lady Arabella's intended nuptials was conducted with the greatest decorum. Lady Madelina herself undertook the business of directing the settlements ; and Mr. Fitzosborne, contenting himself with the power of putting a negative upon her determinations should the terms be unreasonable, showed little of the alacrity and rapture which a destined bridegroom is expected to assume. Various delays arose to retard the concluding ceremony ; and the good-natured world began to doubt, whether the gentleman was most unwilling to part with his liberty, or lady Madelina with her fortune.

Lady Arabella enjoyed, in its fullest extent, the consequence which her present situation gave her. Some mornings she went a shopping to cheap ware-houses ; at others she was waited

upon by different tradesmen at home : she ordered and counter-ordered ; bought and returned ; thought this monstrous pretty, and that monstrous frightful ; gave as much trouble as her rank would possibly enable her to impose, and then complained of the impertinence and imposition of trades people.

During one of the delays, which, as I have already observed, retarded the lighting of the Hymeneal torch, Lady Arabella recollects, that her conquest over science, philosophy, and genius, was infinitely more arduous than Geraldine's easy fascination of such a thoughtless random youth as her brother. It next occurred to her, that she should prodigiously like to mortify her sister's pretended superiority in sense and talents, by exhibiting a Fitzosborne in her chains. The thought of an excursion to Scotland as soon as she was married, must be attended with many inconveniences ; and what was still more repugnant to her feelings, with the renunciation of much eclat and splendor. Beside, it was most desirable that the exhibition should be made while she was invested with full plenitude of power. An express was, therefore, dispatched to Scotland to request, that a brother's hand would consign her's to a husband every way worthy of his alliance. The letter concluded with an acknowledgement of tender trepidations, which nothing but the presence of her Geraldine could allay. Lady Madelina's increasing infirmities rendered her unfit to be the depository of her sorrows ; and her dear Lady Fitzosborne, her only friend, was infinitely too much in the interests of her happy brother, as she styled him, to treat her apprehensive heart with sufficient delicacy.

The  
island

The Monteiths readily complied with a summons which indicated a perfect renewal of domestic harmony. Though the yellow tint of early autumn had just diffused a more picturesque appearance over the romantic banks of Loch Lomond, and announced the joyous season of the “hound and horn,” a dangerous fall from his horse had given the earl a transient disgust to field sports: and though the blooming countess was by no means weary of her rural enjoyments and occupations, she was too young, and too lovely, to reject an invitation to partake of the elegant varieties which London afforded. She intended to act in this, as she had done at her preceding visits; to taste the Circean cup with moderation, and then to retire with dignity from the fascinating banquet. But there are periods, when, if left to its own stability, the firmest foot would fail; and the best regulated mind, deprived of superior guidance, may often deplore its own depravity.

## C H A P. XXIV.

— He reads much,  
He is a great observer, and he looks  
Quite through the deeds of men.

SHAKESPEARE.

LADY ARABELLA prepared her lover for the arrival of the expected strangers. “I would not say so to other people,” said she, “because one ought to shew respect to one’s relations. But to be sure the Monteiths are the very oddest creatures in the world. My

" brother is well enough for one of your fox-hunters, as they call them ; but the lady, " O ! she is so fine and so sensible, and so cautious, and so—I don't know how—vastly disagreeable ; I assure you, you will be highly diverted with her : pray observe her, and tell me all you think of her ; for I shall not take any thing ill that you say. She is prodigiously wise, you must know. I hate wise people, at least such wise people as she is. Play her off ; I shall be vastly entertained."

Developing characters was Mr. Fitzosborne's favourite amusement ; and it was one of his topics of complaint, that he had never since his return to England met with any person that was worth studying. But after he had seen the Monteiths, he did not repeat that opinion. The interesting beauty of the countess, her apparent happiness, and visible influence over her lord's affections, which even his careless manners could not disguise, excited in the philosophic mind of Fitzosborne nearly the same emotions as those which the arch Apostate felt on viewing Adam and Eve in Paradise ; and, like him,

" Aside he turn'd

" For envy ; yet with jealous deer malign  
" Ey'd them askance."

In one particular the resemblance was certainly incomplete. The superior intelligence of the fallen angel knew, that the happiness which he intended to destroy was real. Habitually sceptical, Fitzosborne doubted. He watched the varying turns of Geraldine's animated countenance, analyzed her manner and her expressions

sions with the hope of discovering something to convince him that she was only a polished dissembler. For it was utterly repugnant to all his received ideas, that affection could really subsist between persons of discordant habits, or that principle could supply the place of attachment, and give equal uniformity to the conduct.

The joyous occasion which had summoned him to town gave Lord Monteith a prodigious flow of spirits; and he certainly always appeared to least advantage when most inclined to take the lead in conversation. When he was disposed to talk, he never considered how far the indulgence of his own humour was agreeable to the company. His discourse could only be interesting to himself and Lady Madelina; for it related to his own castle; how much he and Geraldine had improved it; how popular they were among their neighbours; and how they spent their time. He said many ridiculous things, and uttered many expressions indicative of good-nature and benevolence; yet, though he certainly did not intend it, retirement had transformed the gallant Monteith; and his wife and his little girls were still the heroines of his tale. Meantime the countess appeared to be engaged by Lady Arabella's frivolity. Her eye indeed frequently reverted to her lord. But whether her attention proceeded from anxiety or affection even Fitzosborne could not discover.

His lordship at length grew tired; his sister had exhausted her hyperbolical rapture at this happy interview; and the conversation changing to places of public amusement allowed some opening to the countess. The opera was mentioned.

tioned. Lady Arabella declared, that the new grand ballet was so charming, that it absolutely threw her into hysterics. "I protest," continued she, "I don't think I shall dare to go again, for it makes me downright nervous the next day."

"I congratulate you," said Lady Monteith, "on the acquisition of a new pleasure. You had used to express yourself an enemy to music."

"O! I hate it still in a room, or where there is but one performer. But the opera is so different. There the lights and the company, and the scenes, and the dresses, do so increase the effect! And the dances are so fine, and every body is so overcome, and one feels so fascinated!"

"The music I have been lately accustomed to," resumed Geraldine, "is in a very different style. An old Highlander playing upon his bagpipe, and the voices of two or three Scotch girls chaunting one of their simple ditties, which reverberates among our rocks, convey to me a more perfect idea of the powers of melody, than the scenes you describe. And though I hope frequently to visit the opera while in London, I much doubt whether my sensibility can be so strongly affected there, as it has frequently been during my evening rambles about James-town."

"I hope, madam," said Madelina, "that your ladyship never walks beyond the limits of your own park."

"James-town is but a little way from the castle," replied the countess, not immediately entering

entering into the force of this observation;  
“ I go there most days, and the walk is much  
“ pleasanter than the drive.”

“ It is very right, niece,” observed Lady Madelina, in a tone of stricter authority,  
“ that you should assist your dependants;  
“ but you should do it like a gentlewoman;  
“ and too frequent intercourse breeds fami-  
“ liarity and contempt”

“ I have fortunately not found familiarity  
“ and contempt synonymous,” resumed Lady Monteith, who, though generally silently acquiescent, seemed on the present occasion disposed to defend her own conduct. “ I appear to my  
“ colony in one uniform character; and how-  
“ ever frequent my visits, or in whatever style  
“ I make them, a friend is not unwelcome,  
“ and a benefactress need not fear contempt.  
“ Continual intercourse creates a mutual in-  
“ terest. I thoroughly enter into their cha-  
“ racters. Beside, I acquire much knowlege in  
“ various particulars, which those who are not  
“ personally acquainted with humble life can  
“ never accurately possess.”

“ And of what use is that knowlege?” inquired Lady Madelina.

“ It may be applied to various purposes. It  
“ teaches me the value of time. Because while  
“ we are studying amusements to get rid of  
“ what we feel to be an incumbrance, the po-  
“ verty of the labourer makes him conscious of  
“ its importance. He knows that he cannot  
“ waste an hour without finding his daily food  
“ abridged. And when I see the œconomical  
“ contrivances which necessity teaches, the  
“ humble comforts which stand instead of  
“ luxuries, and the cheerful patience with  
“ which real inconveniences are borne by  
“ those

" those who know no happier lot, I cannot (at least immediately) become fastidious and extravagant."

" The unfortunate sensibility of my temper," said Lady Arabella, " would never permit me to frequent such places. You certainly must have very strong nerves, sister. I protest, when I have seen several little dirty, starved, naked children, peeping out of those smoky hovels which stand by the road side, I have often thought that it would be great mercy to shoot them, as one does worn-out horses."

" To shoot them!" exclaimed most of the company.

" Yes!" resumed lady Arabella; " for only think what a miserable life their's must be."

" Did you never see any of these poor little creatures merry?" inquired the countess.

" O yes! the little savages grinned sometimes, and jumped about like monkeys; and with just as much sense; for if they thought at all, they must be miserable."

Geraldine recollects the sentiment, that " where ignorance is bliss," it is both cruel and foolish to impart a knowledge which discovers wretchedness. But while she was considering how best to point out those comforts which opulence and intelligence might impart to the poor, without creating desires unsuitable to their stations, her reflections were interrupted by an harangue of Mr. Fitzosborne.

' Nature, madam,' said he, addressing himself to Lady Arabella, ' is not a niggard; though the imbecillity of political institutions and the corrupt state of society frequently confine her beneficent views. These infant savages

' savages enjoy blessings to which perhaps their  
' oppressors are strangers. Health, natural li-  
' berty, exemption from care, and a happy  
' ignorance of all the restraints which custom  
' imposes, and all the false indulgencies which  
' affluence requires. Their manners are un-  
' praved, their inclinations unsophisicated.—I  
' should think these obscure cots the chosen  
' abodes of innocence and virtue.'

' That is rather too liberal a conjecture,' re-  
turned Lady Monteith, beaming upon the sup-  
posed champion of the equal dealings of Pro-  
vidence a complacent smile. ' My long residence  
in retirement allows me positively to contradict  
the popular notion, that the country is the seat  
of Arcadian happiness and purity, though  
much may be done to ameliorate the condition  
of the lower classes of society; and I am con-  
vinced, that residing among them is one of  
the most probable means of effecting that im-  
portant design.'

' I perfectly agree with your Ladyship's senti-  
ments, particularly when the poor, like the  
fortunate vassals of Monteith, may contem-  
plate exalted rank without fear of imbibing  
exotic vices.' The Countess blushed, and  
bowed at this compliment, without recollecting,  
that it might be intended for her Lord. Fitzos-  
borne watched the sudden emotion. ' Can  
vanity,' said he to himself, ' be the ruling  
foible? If it be, the smothered flame shall  
blaze.'

Lord Monteith now took part in the conver-  
sation. ' I hope, Sir, you mean to put your  
own principles in practice, and that we shall  
be very good friends when you come to reside  
at Kinloch Castle. It is within eighty miles'

'eaf us, and we may frequently join in parties  
'upon the lakes and the moors. I was there  
'once. I thought it a horrid place with its  
'canopied state beds, and worm-eaten tapestry ;  
'but you will give it a more agreeable air when  
'you live there.'

'Live there!' shrieked Lady Arabella.

'What ! live at Kinloch castle? What a bar-  
barous idea !'

'O you are thinking of times of old, poor  
Bella. Yes, they were barbarous, I'll grant.  
But it will be very different when you shall be  
living there with a good husband, from what  
it was when you wanted to set off from it in  
search of one. Poor Bella ! I remember your  
peeping through the painted glass between the  
huge stone window-frames, and wondering,  
whether the object that looked black at a great  
distance was a cow or a gentleman. Poor  
Bella ! If you are any thing of a knight-  
errant, Fitzosborne, you would have liked to  
have seen her shut up in that castle, like an  
enchanted lady, waiting for some gallant  
Longsword to set her at liberty. But I suppose  
Longsword was benighted, or set upon by  
Saracens, for he never found his way to the  
castle—Did he, Bella ?'

My Lord had now recovered the conversation ; and no common effort could get it out of his hands, till Lady Arabella very gravely told him, that his raillery was misplaced. His Lordship then, starting up, gave his sister a good-humoured kiss, declared that he did not mean to displease her, promised to say no more about the castle that nobody could get out of, or the knight that never could get in ; and whispering her, that he then thought her the prettiest pri-  
soner

soner he ever saw in his life, he summoned the Countess and hurried her back to Portland-place.

Lady Arabella scarcely waited till they were out of sight, to ask if they were not strange creatures.

'The Countess,' said Fitzosborne, 'is most amazingly beautiful.'

'She must be very much improved then,' returned Lady Arabella; 'for it used to be doubted whether she was even pretty. But I believe gentlemen who have lived much abroad have a singular taste in beauty.'

'There are some forms,' said Fitzosborne, bowing with a significant air, 'which would be esteemed lovely in every region. Lady Monteith's chief beauty is the sparkling intelligence of her countenance; for certainly her features are not regular.'

'No,' rejoined her Ladyship a little appeased, 'her features are not regular; and some people will call that intelligence in her countenance conceit.'

'Is she counted vain?'  
'Insufferably so. It is her ruling foible.—Every body who is acquainted with her knows it. I wonder you did not discover it.'

Fitzosborne promised to consider her character with deeper attention at the next opportunity. 'If vanity,' said he to himself, 'be indeed her predominant fault, it is impossible that her apparent happiness can be sincere. The vanity of a superior mind is not gratified by common incense; and Monteith seems too thoughtless to discern her peculiar excellencies, and too self-engrossed to give them their appropriate praise. I suspect, that his personal advan-

tages

old stages attracted her inexperience, and that her bad judgment now secretly reprobates the premature choice.'

Lord Monteith's opinion of the intended disposal of his sister was, that it was a very well-schemed thing. ' She was just a fit mate,' said he, ' for a younger brother. Fitzosborne seems to have a great deal of sense, and we all know that Arabella is not one of king Solomon's family. She will, perhaps, prove a little refractory at first; but he will conduct himself cleverly, and soon convince her that the husband is the superior character. You think so, Geraldine, don't you?'

' O, undoubtedly! ' But, with whatever certainty the Countess could speak of her own situation, she felt extremely doubtful as to the happy issue of Lady Arabella's prospects.--In spite of the reserve of her lover's character, their dissimilarity was evident. She was trifling, superficial, selfish, and unguarded: with respect to Fitzosborne, whenever the thick veil with which he chose to obscure himself admitted a casual discovery, superior intelligence and liberality of sentiment were apparent. ' I know,' said Geraldine to herself, ' that Arabella's temper is impetuous, her prejudices are rooted, and her views of connubial happiness are too superficial to make her even wish to assimilate her taste to that of her husband's, or to assign any merit to complacent acquiescence. His enlarged understanding must discover her foolish pertinacity; and the generous feeling that always accompanies a liberal mind will be perpetually wounded by the contracted ideas of a selfish heart. Her ridiculous opinion of the constant incense which beauty demands precludes

eludes all hope of her improvement. She will be continually requiring a flatterer, and he a companion. I am certain, that even now she strongly feels the disproportion of their minds. What harsh expressions did he utter against the oppressors of the poor. They were, doubtless, pointed at her extravagant notions, which seemed to degrade them from the rank of rational creatures. Indeed, though his mercenary design somewhat debases his character, I pity Mr Fitzosborne. He appears to be well worthy of a happier fate. The chain of her reflections was here broken by his Lordship's observing, that she was as dull and as bad company as his future brother-in-law.

Calm thinking villains, whom no faith can fix,

Of crooked councils and dark politics.

POPE.

FITZOSBORNE called to return the honour of Lord Monteith's visit just at the time when his Lordship was gone out on some important business. This engagement had been discussed the preceding evening, but philosophers are very apt to be absent. He inquired if the Countess were at home, and on sending in his name he was admitted. There could be no impropriety in receiving a visit from a gentleman who was soon to become a relation; and Geraldine had

been

been sufficiently interested by his appearance to be anxious to know if the estimate that she had formed of his character were just.

Previous to his arrival, she had been amusing herself with a harp which had lain silent for some years. It had been new strung by an eminent hand, and was become capable of producing the most ravishing harmony. Fitzosborne was an idolator of music. The skill of the countess was too well known to admit of disqualifying speeches. She readily complied with his request to exhibit the powers of her instrument, and after a graceful prelude accompanied it with her voice in the following sonnet :

### SONNET TO MAY.

Come May, the empire of the earth assume,  
Be crown'd with flowers as universal queen;  
Take from fresh budded groves their tender green,  
Bespangled with Pomona's richest bloom,  
And form thy vesture. Let the sun illumine  
The dew-drops glittering in the blue serene,  
And let them hang, like orient pearls, between  
Thy locks besprent with Flora's best perfume.  
Attend your sovereign's steps, ye balmy gales !  
O'er her ambrosial floods of fragrance pour,  
Let livelier verdure animate the vales,  
And brighter hues embellish every flower;  
And hark, the concert of the woodland hails,  
All gracious May ! thy presence, and thy power.

She enforced the last line with the whole compass of her melodious voice. The apartment reverberated with the magic sounds. She paused. Fitzosborne seemed lost in speechless ecstasy.

He

He raised his eyes, suffused with tears, and they met those of the countess.—He retired to the window to recover from his emotion, while she formed the ineffectual wish, that Arabella had possessed a mind capable of estimating and rewarding such refined sensibility.

It was some moments before Fitzosborne was able to renew the conversation. At length he hesitatingly articulated, ‘ You devote many hours

‘ every day to this charming science?’

‘ No, indeed! I very seldom play, unless to perfect myself in a new tune, or to amuse lord Monteith.’

‘ Is lord Monteith fond of music?’

‘ Passionately so.’

‘ I did not suspect so. Of what kind?’

‘ Every kind: from the loftiest compositions of Handel to the simplest strains of rustic harmony. But I presume, sit, your taste is more discriminating; and being formed upon the refined Italian model, it requires artful combination and striking contrast.’

‘ It requires, madam, such an exalted gratification as it has just enjoyed.’ He then rose, as if intending to take leave, when a miniature of Lucy Evans, which hung over the chimney glass, appeared first to attract his eye; and he exclaimed, ‘ You paint, I know; do you take likenesses?’

‘ Very bad ones,’ said the countess, handing to him the picture. ‘ And when you view that juvenile performance with attention, you will say so. But it is highly valuable to me, since it gives me a faint resemblance of a very estimable friend.’

‘ I know,’ said Fitzosborne, fixing his eyes upon her with a most penetrating glance, ‘ that

‘ your

your soul was really formed for friendship. I  
am a physiognomist, madam.

I do not suspect you of magical skill, replied Geraldine laughing, for I am very much inclined to controvert your opinion. I never had but one intimate friendship; and I meet with my Lucy too seldom, and our epistolary communications are too limited, to admit of our attachment imprinting any strong lines upon my countenance; even allowing, what I am not inclined to admit, that mental habits impress inelible marks upon the muscular organs.

I must enter upon a defence of my art, madam; and if I am betrayed into any improprieties, remember yourself only can be to blame. You have long been attached to this lady, and she is sensible, animated, and penetrating.

If you go on with such fortunate guesses, I shall begin to retract, and believe you possessed of the power of divination.

I only wish to conceive you, that a constant perseverance in one train of thought must give a correct habit to the mind, and diffuse a serene dignity over the countenance. And certainly the collision of two ingenuous minds will brighten the qualities of each. The soul ever seeks its counterpart, and tries to assimilate itself to what it admires. Your correspondence with a person such as you allow this lady to be, accounts for the sparkling intelligence of your manner, and all the lively emanations of your fascinating wit.

The countess replied with a blushing smile, I believe you are labouring under a little illusion. You certainly mistake me for lady Ara-

bella;

‘ bella; or are you so accustomed to compliment, that you involuntarily adopt that strain, to every body?’

‘ You may mistake my character, madam,’ said Fitzosborne; ‘ but it is impossible that I can suppose you are lady Arabella.’ A deep sigh escaped at those words. He hesitated, and then proceeded: ‘ I can, however, entreat your pardon with a better grace, as I did not seek an opportunity of expressing the sentiments which I strongly feel. If there be any indecorum in admiring you and requesting your friendship, recollect, madam, I share that guilt with the original of this charming portrait.’

The countess immediately replied: ‘ Every branch of lord Monteith’s family has indubitable claims on my attention. Give me leave to assure you, that his lordship regards you with the sincerest esteem, and that he is impatient for an event to take place which will cement his friendship by the bond of alliance.’

‘ If it be in my power to make lady Arabella happy—’ said Fitzosborne, fixing his eyes upon the ground, and seeming to plunge into a gloomy chaos of doubt; ‘ but I will hope for the best. We know, that ‘ whatever is is right.’ As the world is now constituted, events are not in our own hands.’ He then rose, and took leave with a more profound sigh than any he had before uttered. ‘ Poor man!’ ejaculated lady Monteith, ‘ his feelings are too acute for happiness. He will become a prey to the most morbid melancholy, and his inattentive wife will consider his dejection as a sufficient excuse for her dissipation. I see he is forced into this fatal connexion by his friends. Why does

does he not exert the natural independence of his energetic character, and contemn the mercenary bond ? How happy would he be with such a partner as my Lucy !

Could lady Monteith have penetrated the dark disguises of premeditating villainy, how different would have been the conclusion of her mental soliloquy ! She would as soon have pointed out an alliance between the meek dignified Octavia, and the insidious, cruel, impenetrable Tiberius. And now let me for a few moments exercise that digressive privilege which I have claimed for moral purposes.

I would ask the accurate judges of mankind, what striking traits of superior eminence are yet visible in Fitzosborne's conduct ? What generous sentiment falling spontaneously from the tongue ? what artless discovery of the genuine emotions of an upright worthy heart ? Are they charmed with the morals of a man, whose ambiguous expressions can only be interpreted by supposing that he secretly despises the woman whom he avowedly pursues ? Contempt for such mercenary treachery must be the natural sentiment in unsophisticated minds ; and contempt must rise into abhorrence in every breast that is uncorrupted by the laxity of modern principles, if they suppose that his ardent commendations of a *married* lady were intended to convey to her heart the audacious idea, that they proceeded from the warm emotions of preference.

The mind of Geraldine was unsophisticated and incorrupt. She saw his reluctance to his intended marriage, and interpreted his praises as he designed she should. Yet neither contempt nor abhorrence arose in her breast. On the contrary, though steadily determined to prevent any insinuation

insinuation to lady Arabella's disadvantage, and to repress every expression inconsistent with the pure dignity of a matron, she felt for the wiley Fitzosborne a mixture of pity and esteem.

— O Flattery !

How soon thy soft insinuating oil  
Supplies the toughest souls !

What better method can I adopt to convince the younger part of my readers of the necessity of shutting their ears to the siren song, than placing the example of lady Monteith full in their view ? Adorned with every natural and acquired accomplishment ; ‘ chaste as the icicle on Dian’s temple ;’ attached to her husband ; the fondest of mothers ; domestic, prudent, and religious. What profanation even to suppose such consummate excellence open to an illicit attack ! Yet Fitzosborne, deeply versed in the science of human frailty, no sooner perceived that her vanity listened to his blandishments, than he not only determined to assail her principles, but felt a firm conviction that his enterprize would succeed.

Her delicacy required, and his duplicity meditated, a covert assault. He perceived on recollection, that he had been too unguarded in the preceding conversation, and he resolved to follow the path which she had pointed out, by affecting great respect for lady Arabella, and cultivating the friendship of lord Monteith. He despised his lordship’s abilities too much to fear that his observation would be any impediment to his views ; and his own assumption of the title of a husband would only give an unprincipled seducer more

more unsuspected opportunities of forwarding his insidious designs.

His visits were now generally made when he knew that lord Monteith was at home; and if his lordship was abroad, he only left a card for the countess. His behaviour to her, when they met in company, was pointedly respectful and reserved. But care was always taken to show that such reserve was the effect of painful effort. By studiously avoiding every opportunity of engaging her in conversation, and by a marked neglect of those offices of general civility which the laws of politeness prescribed, he appeared fearful of trusting to the susceptibility of his own heart. He seemed only anxious to guard his mind from the intrusion of every image inconsistent with his fidelity to lady Arabella. His eyes were fixed upon her, as if he hoped to discover something worthy of his attention. Sometimes, indeed, they wandered to lady Monteith; but if she observed him, they were instantly withdrawn, with an expression of regret for the involuntary detraction.

His aim was to exhibit a superior mind, inflexible in principle, but tenderly susceptible, maintaining a severe struggle, and determined to be victorious. Lady Monteith was so far the dupe of his artifices, as to view his conduct in the light that he desired. But she also drew from it a consequence which he did not intend. She fancied his apparent efforts were successful, and she now only regretted, that Arabella wanted both the inclination and the capacity to improve her delicate situation to her own advantage.

It has been observed, that the seducer several times conquers his unwarrantable desires in the course of his guilty pursuit. Compelled to adopt

adopt disguises, to consult opportunities, to avoid premature discoveries, the pain of repeated restrictions, imposed for the purposes of vice, is greater than would attend the virtuous resolution of abandoning the insidious project. This observation was eminently just in the instance of Fitzosborne. His soul was not whirled along by the tempest of passion. Beauty did not excite violent emotion. Sense and sweetness carried with them no irresistible charm. His frigid heart was too cold and selfish to prompt his diabolical invention, or to extenuate his crimes. His vices were systematic, the result of design, guided by method, sanctioned by sophistry, and originating from the covert war which he waged, not merely against the chastity, but also against the principles of his victims: not solely against their reputation, their peace of mind, and their temporal prospects, but against their notions of rectitude and religion, against those immortal hopes which sustain the afflicted and sooth the corroding pangs of repentant guilt.

To lady Arabella, unconscious of his designs, Fitzosborne's increased attention gave a livelier pleasure, from the idea that he intended by that means to convey a marked contempt of the countess. Her elation would have been more complete, if he would have cordially joined in those remarks on the person and behaviour of Geraldine which supplied lady Madelina's domestic party with an agreeable topic for conversation. She recollects, however, with satisfaction, that if he did not join in these censures, he did not contradict them, and the extenuating apologies which he sometimes urged might rather be termed an attempt to 'damn with faint praise,' than a friendly defence. She was confirmed in her

on ~~halloo~~ ~~giving~~ ~~using~~ ~~all~~ ~~opinion~~  
jobs

opinion, that her admirer secretly despised lady Monteith's pretensions to mental superiority, by observing that her *bons mots* and remarks passed equally unregarded, while her own were sure of having in him one attentive listener. Lady Arabella's views of life were neither very accurate nor extensive. Yet she had some suspicion, that the connubial bond operated as a powerful soporific upon the deference, observance, and tenderness, which lovers sometimes, even in this refined age, think proper to assume. Her dear viscountess had assured her, that if Edward's behaviour as a husband equalled his attentions as an admirer, they would certainly be pointed at as an *exemplary* couple; for that at present all the world knew him by the title of lady Arabella Macdonald's slave. No one more strongly felt those passions which Pope affirms to be the predominate features in the mind of women, 'the love of pleasure,' and 'the love of sway,' than her ladyship. But since it was at least doubtful, whether she could continue to be 'queen for life,' she was desirous to protract the period which acknowledged her right of government; and as the gentleman was not very urgent for an early day, the lady's sensibility was not hurt by repeated denials.

Another unexpected cause of delay at this time intervened. Lady Madelina had often declared, that as soon as she had settled her dear niece to her satisfaction she should have entirely done with a world of which she repeatedly assured her friends she was quite weary. Twenty years before, on her first marriage with her ever-lamented Sir Simon Frazer, she had used similar expressions. She then said that she only lived for his sake; and if she were so unfortunate as to lose him, her 'occupation

cipation would be gone; and existence would become an insupportable burden. But as that deprecated event did happen without any lasting change in her ladyship's apparent relish for the good things of this life, it was suspected, that twenty years hence her affectionate heart might find some pretext for the strong attachment to her person, which her excessive attention to her own health and safety rendered visible to all who knew her. When the reader, therefore, considers the infinite succession of last plans, and final engagements, which she would probably have pleaded, his sensibility will be less hurt to find, that death dealt by her, as he did by 'the fair lady in costly robes,' mentioned in the good old song, by compelling her to trust future events to that Providence whose superintendence had not been her favourite speculation.

I have observed, that the settlements were drawn up under lady Madelna's eye, who seemed desirous of extending the supremacy which she had uniformly exercised over every person with whom she was connected (except her niece) beyond the grave. She had multiplied entails, and considered every possible event of contention, separation, divorce and second marriage. She had explored the family pedigree, picked out the most sonorous hereditary christian names, and stringing three or four together, which were capable of liquid pronunciation, she ordered, that they should be adopted by the successive sons and daughters of this intended marriage, on pain of forfeiting all right to inheritance. Jointure, pin-money, and alimony took up several pages, and the finished deed had more the appearance of a truce between two inveterate enemies than a recognition of mutual confidence and

and esteem. The very sight of these formidable parchments must have annihilated the whole court of Cytherea ; but fortunately the modern Hymen never brings his causes before that tribunal, which is now exclusively employed in trying affairs of libertinism, or, as it is politely termed, gallantry.

Lady Madelina perused the stupendous performance with delight ; weighed the technical meaning of every word which the useful tautology of the law had introduced ; and, trusting, that the united names of Fitzosborne, Frazer, and Macdonald might be found in courts and castles a thousand years hence, declared that she was perfectly satisfied. It is supposed that the pronunciation of those words, which she had never before been known to use, occasioned a mortal revulsion in her oracular organs, for she was found speechless next morning. Lady Arabella's determined resolution of enjoying the pleasures of a public breakfast prevented her from attending to the assurances of her aunt's woman, that such a change must be inevitably followed by mortal consequences. She contented herself with leaving positive orders to be immediately sent for if lady Madelina grew worse, and drove off with lady Fitzosborne, who convinced her that she was perfectly right ; for, as the patient could not speak, company could do her no service. The office of smoothing the bed of death devolved on Geraldine, who hastened to the house of mourning at the first intimation of what had happened, and arrived a few moments before lady Madelina expired.

oldishness to sing her part. The very best has  
abodw the bantlings ave fave pincers  
periculare wchf wchf wchf  
cent to Chyberas, per fortunatly the  
Haven never did evanish  
in byzolq. **C H A P. XXVI.** which shew  
villq is nes to minisid in affs grax

Let then the fair one beautifully cry,  
In Magdalene's loose hair and lifted eye.

PoR.

**T**HE melancholy event related in my last Chapter was speedily conveyed to the gay groupe whom the elegant *dejeûne* of the duchess of A. had assembled on the flowery banks of Thames. It was announced to lady Arabella with very little preparation; for as, in compliance with the wishes of the company, though declaredly out of spirits, she had just consented to exhibit her own fine person and her lover's to the best advantage by standing up in a reel, no one supposed but that she might hear the sad tale with decent composure. It was, however, quite the reverse, and her sensibility now became as remarkable, as her fortitude had been before. She fainted, fell into hysterics, wept, recovered, and was at last conveyed apparently lifeless to her carriage. Every creature present partook in her concern for lady Madelina's death, for it certainly spoiled a most delightful party. Though the company endeavoured to recover their spirits after the fair mourner was removed, all attempt at brilliancy was prevented by the unavoidable intrusion of serious ideas. The ladies grew as stupid as if they were at church. Death's heads and physicians intruded into every subject; and the last topic of conversation that was started

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by the gentlemen was a discussion of the merits of the patent coffin.

Lady Arabella was accompanied home by the Fitzosbornes. The viscountess engaged in the friendly task of consolation, while Edward, leaning back with his arms folded, and his eyes fixed upon the lovely sufferer, (I suppose) more deeply sympathized in her sorrow; for the harangues of the comforter were only interrupted by lady Arabella's sobs and sighs, which did not abate in violence, though lady Fitzosborne was diffuse on the folly of grieving for what was sure to happen, and therefore what nobody could prevent. The carriage at length stopped. Lady Arabella was supported up stairs, swallowed more hartshorn, and at length became sufficiently composed to make inquiries after the particulars of an event of which she had only yet received a general account.

Lady Madelina's first gentlewoman, a Macdonald by an indirect descent, entered on the sad recital. Nothing could be more capable of being compressed into a small compass; but Mrs. Margaret was eminently gifted with that species of oratory which may be termed expansion. Her poor dear lady's merits, her poor dear lady's sufferings, the confidence her poor dear lady placed in her faithful services, and a firm conviction that she never should survive her poor dear lady: these topics were expatiated upon, till Arabella became a little displeased that any one should take up grief just at the instant herself had laid it down. It came out in the course of the narration, that from some peculiar circumstances lady Monteith had adopted an opinion, that the spark of life was not actually extinguished but that the speedy exertion of proper means might

might revive the suspended animation. To this opinion the physicians who had been summoned, lent some countenance; and the humanity of the countess prompted her not only to command these applications, but by her presence to prevent the proceedings which are sometimes injudiciously adopted at the first moment of apparent dissolution.

Mrs. Margaret was not only convinced of the inefficacy of the attempt, but conscientiously believing it to be very presumptuous, had refused her services with some little sense of indignity at having had them required, and keen susceptibility at the supposition that she could bear to stay in the room where her poor dear lady lay. Arabella joined in her opinion; and the discourse changed from the virtues of Mrs. Margaret and the deceased, to the wickedness of disturbing the dead, and the concern which the affectionate niece now felt, that her dear aunt had none of her own family to attend her in her last moments.

The failure of lady Monteith's efforts relieved Arabella from what might more properly be called a vexation than a distress; and her softer feelings, freed from disagreeable embarrassments, had leisure to flow in the delicate channels which etiquette prescribes to grief. She mourned for one fortnight in the sweetest manner imaginable, dressed in a close cap, with her bouquet stuck on one side, her robe loosely fastened, and her arms hanging negligently.

All her visitors agreed, that she looked prettier than ever, and Fitzosborne was continually reminded of those well known lines which characterise the fair sex, as designed to 'be adorned

by distress,' and 'dressed most amiably in tears.'

But it was not over the unconscious tomb that this fair flowret drooped. The increased sensibility of the present age, grown too fragile to encounter the morbid contagion of death, declines all intimate acquaintance with spectacles of mortality, and deputes hireling hands to perform those offices which the sterner fortitude of former times claimed as the peculiar privilege of affection and kindred. My attachment to obsolete manners inclines me to refer the universal custom of flying from the bed of death and its melancholy appendages, to some other cause than excessive tenderness. I suspect the fastidiousness of indulgence, accustomed to bask in the sunshine of life, and bereft of sufficient energy even to wish to procure a defence against the storm. I discover the enervating habits of dissipation, the cant of flattery, and the sophisms of self-delusion. Beauty will not contemplate the fixed rayless eye, lest the recollection should obscure the brilliancy of its own: youth and health refuse to be acquainted with the livid cheek, which preaches the importance of the passing hours; and gaiety abjures all knowledge of the clay-cold reliques of the human form, lest the fearful sentence of 'such shalt thou be' should palsy the graceful step, arrest the swift career of levity, and render the whisper of adulation uninteresting.

Lady Arabella's first tears flowed beneath her brother's roof; but her extreme susceptibility soon required a fresh asylum. Lady Monteith was the worst comforter in the world; and she was convinced that her poor spirits would be quite overcome,

overcome, if she did not get amongst people a little more like other folks. Geraldine indeed had performed the office of a consoler to her Lucy with tolerable success; but the retired daughter of a country clergyman, and a fashionable belle, are different characters: and either the simplicity of the countess did not discriminate, or some secret spark of ill-nature prevented her from adopting the proper method of treating her present guest. She permitted lady Arabella's tears to stream without any admonition that they might dim her eyes or injure her complexion; and in the most violent paroxysms of grief she strove to soften her emotions by leading the discourse to her dear aunt's affection for her, and anxious solicitude to promote her happiness. She had once the inhumanity to suggest the idea, that the separated spirit would be afflicted by witnessing the sorrow of surviving friends; and that the violent indulgence of extreme regret might be construed to proceed from a want of due submission to the Supreme Disposer of events. She had indeed successively expatiated on these topics to Miss Evans. The countenance of that artless girl assumed an angelic composure whilst listening to the solemn sentiments; and her hands and eyes uplifted in meek resignation seemed to say, 'I will not impede the beatitude of my mother, nor murmur at the dispensations of my God.'

But in the present instance the awful allusion produced very horrific effects. Lady Arabella's ideas of 'things unseen' were extremely confused. She had never had time to investigate the subject herself; and, from some arguments which Mr. Fitzosborne had used, she was inclined to hope, that the vague notions which she had

had picked up in her early years were purely chimerical terrors, the effect of low prejudices. She, therefore, replied to the consolatory arguments of the countess with a shriek of apprehension; besought her in future to avoid such shocking expressions; and, looking round her, as if in expectation of seeing lady Madelina's ghost, she became so fearful of having a visionary attendant, that she durst not move from one room to another without being accompanied by a corporeal guard.

At Mr. Fitzosborne's next visit she expatiated on the premeditated cruelty of lady Monteith, who chose the very period of her being so low that she could hardly support herself, to afflict her by naming subjects that she never could bear. She was perfectly innocent, she said; had never hurt any body, nor committed any crime in her life; and why need she be talked to about separated spirits, and religion, as if she were the greatest sinner in the world? Lady Monteith had even hinted, that there would be an indecorum in her going into public immediately after the interment of an aunt, who had to her supplied the tenderness and protection of the maternal character; and she was certain that the funeral was delayed, not so much out of respect, as to keep her immured, and to make her break her heart, which was much too refined and tender to endure those forms of woe to which stronger minds might submit. In fine, she enjoined Fitzosborne to state to lady Monteith the impropriety of her conduct, and to convince her how wrong it was to talk about disagreeable things which she could not be sure were true. Edward undertook the office, but advised lady Arabella not to be too sanguine of success.

success. Prejudices, he said, were stubborn things to contend with, and lady Monteith had unfortunately imbibed several. He complimented lady Arabella on her more enlarged notions, but conjured her to conceal a superiority which might probably excite envy ; and in case of any future attempts to inspire her with superstitious terrors, he wished her either to give a sudden turn to the conversation, or to enjoy the triumph of reason over bigotry in a dignified silence.

Fitzosborne entered on the task enjoined, with the cruel avidity of a sanguinary mind, bent on destroying what it was necessitated to revere. His observations on lady Monteith's behaviour enabled him clearly to delineate her character; and as he founded his hopes of success on her evident love of praise, he was sensible that the unaffected sincerity of her religious principles would prove a steady bulwark too powerful to be assailed by open attacks, and which he must either undermine or abandon his pursuit. He perceived, that though her vivacity at times transcended the limits of rigid prudence, even in the wildest flights of gaiety the most guarded ridicule on sacred subjects was unpalatable; and though the engrossing amusements of polite life afforded less leisure for reflection and devotional exercises during her stay in town, she ever passed a dissipated Sunday with evident regret, and appeared to feel every omission of duty with the self-reproach of conscious error, rather than to avow her neglect with the bold air of one who expects to be applauded for liberality and exemption from prescribed forms. The footing on which he was received in the family gave him frequent occasions of perceiving, that,

though

though she did not burst out into frequent censures against immorality, she never treated a gross deviation from morality and decorum with that levity of remark which warrants the conclusion, that the observer's principles are too relaxed to view flagitious conduct with proper abhorrence. Though no one knew better how to wing the shaft of railing, and to encourage ‘sport that wrinkled care derides,’ wit was with her the companion of unreproved pleasure, not the child of unrestrained liberty. Its frolic hand was ever taught to respect the palladium of virtue and religion.

The event which Geraldine had lately witnessed confirmed her habitual reverence for serious subjects. Without professing to feel any marked attachment to lady Madelina, or affecting sorrow for her lots, she had contemplated an object of mortality with the sympathetic thoughtfulness of one who felt conscious that she was a fellow-pilgrim, journeying to the same bourne. A conviction of the instability of temporal possessions, and the inefficiency of human aid, would naturally direct a considerate mind to firmer supports, and to recur to the idea of a traveller, than which nothing can be more analogous to human life. The certainty of a limited residence amongst the objects of sense excited a strong solicitude to extend her knowledge of things invisible, and to secure an interest in that undiscovered world of which she must one day become an inhabitant.

A state of mind like that which I have described appears at the first glance to be unfavourable to the designs of a Fitzesborne. He thought it otherwise. It was a disposition which naturally led to the discussion of moral and religious truths.

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truths. The decent forms which the custom of the world still sanctions prescribed to the Monteiths the necessity of avoiding promiscuous visitors, and absenting from public amusements. And though the fair Arabella seemed to cast a longing look from her solitude upon forbidden pleasure, the countess listened to the narrative of the day with a more languid attention, and imperceptibly led back the conversation to some improving subject. Her attempts generally frightened lady Arabella, and compelled her to take refuge in her own apartments; where she found occupation in consulting with her maid on the changes of ornament which the alterations in her mourning would admit. Lord Monteith, though at first doubtful how he should kill time during this melancholy period of confinement, found so much amusement in ringing the dumb bell and learning to play on the violin, that he relapsed into his old misfortune of want of leisure; and Fitzosborne would have found it more difficult to avoid than to select opportunities for private conversation with Geraldine.

## C H A P. XXVII.

— In discourse more sweet—  
 Others apart sat on a hill retired,  
 In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high  
 Of Providence, so e-knowledge, will, and fate,  
 Fix'd fate, free will, fore-knowledge absolute,  
 And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.  
 Of good and evil much they argued, then,  
 Of happiness and final misery,  
 Passion and apathy, glory and shame,  
 Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy.

MILTON.

**R**EADING was one of lady Monteith's constant amusements; and among her favourite writers the moral pages of Johnson held a distinguished pre eminence. His instructive romance of Rasselas occupied her one morning. She stopped at the part which seemed to intimate the author's belief in the possibility of spectral appearances. The idea strongly engrossed her imagination. She ruminated on the arguments which might be adduced on either side, and continued in a profound reverie when Fitzosborne entered the room.

After a pause, in which lady Monteith was trying to disengage her ideas from the train of reflection which they had pursued, Edward politely expressed his fears that he had interrupted an agreeable study; and, with an intimation that he would immediately withdraw, inquired what subject occupied her attention. She delivered to him the unclosed volume without any comment. He read the passage to which her finger referred,

referred, and restored it with an observation, that the British censor was perfectly consistent. Geraldine, mistaking this remark for approbation, replied, that she had ever thought him so, and therefore strove to form her mind by the exalted standard his works prescribed.

"I agree with you," said Fitzosborne.  
"His writings do indeed prescribe an exalted  
standard of morality. A gigantic one, I  
should rather say, utterly inadequate to the  
present state of the world. His views and  
writings are, however, all uniform. An  
enemy to levity and simplicity, a lover of  
discipline and system, averse to those rights  
which man inherently possesses, tenacious of  
those bulwarks which society forms, he is re-  
pulsive in his politics, uncompromising in his  
morality, and austere in his religion."

It was only the last observation which convinced the countess that this exordium was designed to censure her favourite author, and she began his defence by making some preliminary concessions. In extenuation of that air of discontent and depression which ever pervades his works when he refers to the situation of a professed writer, she maintained, that large allowances ought to be made for the sensibility of unpatronised merit, conscious of desert, and struggling under calamity. She added, that the situation of the moralist in his early years precluded him from entering into those more refined classes of society, whose amiable polish might have softened the asperities of his natural character. But since the world already possessed many elegant instructors, who knew how to aim the lighter shafts of satire, and to blend improvement with amusement, perhaps the lover of

of literature would not regret the circumstances that gave him one less urbane moralist, whose austere sense exhibited the noblest model of energetic composition and exalted principle.

"Your justification, madam," said Fitzof-borne, "is conclusive. The page of Johnson will ever be resorted to by the lover of variety, and will claim the appropriate commendations which you have given it, from minds capable of appreciating his real worth. He is too profound to be the idol of the million: and as his beauties can only be relished by an understanding as vigorous as his own, so his precepts seem calculated for dispositions that resemble him in firmness. On such strong minds his tendency to superstition can produce no bad effects."

"My acquaintance is too limited," rejoined the countess, "for me to know a person to whom I could not safely recommend the works of Johnson."

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Edward. "I should have many objections to Lady Arabella's seeing the passage which has wrought your mind into its present state of high enthusiasm. The uncommon susceptibility and delicacy of her character would make her feel painful alarms, while I see you only indulge a fine frenzy." In a conversation you lately had with her, even some of your guarded expressions have caused her the most distressing agitation."

Lady Monteith recollects that she was talking to a lover, and determined to endure a little puerility. She acknowledged, that it was natural for Arabella to seem depressed immediately after the loss of a friend who had acted the part of

of a foster-mother to her, and she promised to be very cautious in future. "But," continued she, "I must own that the invisible agency of separated spirits is a very favourite theme with me; and though, contrary to the opinion of the Abyssinian sage, I could affirm, that we never have any certain evidence that the dead are permitted to become objects of our senses, I have long rejoiced in the hope, that our departed friends are the agents employed by over-ruling Providence to perform offices of care and tenderness to their surviving connexions. This thought has most frequently occurred to me, as I have bent over my sleeping children, and have fancied glorified beings watched our unconscious hours with similar attention. When I was once threatened with the loss of my eldest darling, I found sensible consolation in the idea of its becoming a guardian cherub to sustain the innocence of its sisters through a dangerous world, and to receive my parting spirit at the hour of my dissolution."

While the countess spoke, her radiant eyes were suffused with tears. Fitzosborne, checking some unsubdued struggles of conscience, which almost tempted him to wish he could enjoy such visionary delights, coolly replied to her energetic speech: "I should be very sorry, madam, to interrupt those agreeable reveries which in minds of your temperature can rarely be prejudicial. I shall only state the dangerous consequences of such illusions becoming general. What a tremendous super-structure of imposition might priest-craft erect upon such a visionary basis! You do not pretend, madam, to say, that your hopes rest

"rest upon any real foundation. The nature  
"of the soul has hitherto eluded inquiry. It  
"may in time become capable of absolute de-  
"finition; and though the age is not at pre-  
"sent sufficiently enlightened to afford absolute  
"proof of this supposed immaterial substance  
"being only a mere exquisite configuration of  
"perishable atoms, incapable of distinct ex-  
"istence, the glorious epocha of truth and  
"reason is too near to allow us to believe the  
"possibility of spectral appearances, or even of  
"spiritual agency, in the manner your imagi-  
"nation prompts you to wish."

Though Lady Monteith was no deep theolo-  
gian, she had heard of the millennium, and the  
suspension of consciousness in the disembodied  
soul; and she concluded that Fitzosborne was a  
convert to those doctrines. She was by no  
means aware of the deeper tendency of his views;  
yet, as she thought there was something peculiar  
in his opinions, she wished to fathom him upon  
these subjects. She knew enough of the world to  
be convinced, that divinity was not the favourite  
study of young men of fashion: but she knew  
too, that deep learning was equally excluded  
from polite circles. Fitzosborne had been an-  
nounced to her as the "mirror of information;"  
and she saw nothing ridiculous in the idea, that  
a man of reading should devote part of his at-  
tention to the study of the noblest truths. In-  
difference on serious subjects was, as far as her  
observations extended, combined with ignorance  
and a general relaxation of mind. Fitzos-  
borne's manner evinced energy and attention.  
She had often felt indignant at hearing the wit-  
haling attempt to ridicule what he did not under-  
stand, or the libertine seek to invalidate what he  
feared to believe. But Fitzosborne possessed too  
much

much real talent to envy the wreath that fades upon the coxcomb's brow, and his conduct seemed too correct to supply him with a motive for taking shelter in infidelity. His sentiments on every subject were moral and liberal. His self-command was exemplary; his information general; his reasoning, though flowery, ingenuous, and, in Lady Monteith's opinion, judicious. I have already observed, that her parts were rather brilliant than profound. It will not therefore be surprising, that she should be easily entangled in the snare of a syllogism, or that the unsuspecting sincerity of her heart should render her a dupe to any one who took the trouble to play the specious consummate hypocrite.

In forming her opinion of the dangerous character which was now exposed to her observation, she had fallen into the same error of precipitate judgment which she had been formerly guilty of in the case of Lord Monteith. She now supplied talents with as much liberality as she formerly created virtues. Experience had convinced her, that love is apt to look through magnifying optics; yet, though one pleasing phantom faded after another, something really estimable still remained; and on her comparing her own lot with that of others, she found abundant reason to acquiesce in a state of resigned content. Recalling some of Mrs. Evans's early precepts, she had laboured to subdue those more exquisite refinements of sensibility, which vainly look for consummate enjoyment in this world; and, without feeling too lively regrets for the want of unattainable good, she enjoyed the cup of blessing which Providence tendered to her acceptance. She was in this

state of mind when her acquaintance with Fitzosborne commenced. The peculiarity of his character drew her attention. The evident infelicity of his connubial prospects attracted pity. His conduct awakened esteem, and his intellectual superiority excited admiration. Neither did she discover from what secret failing in herself that admiration sprung, nor that Vanity is as great a magnifier as Love.

Fitzosborne had been so careful to veil his scepticism in ambiguous phrases, that Lady Monteith's solicitude to discover his principles really arose from an idea that their singularity chiefly proceeded from their excellence, and that by conversing with him she should strengthen her own convictions. She had often lamented, that Lord Monteith's volatile temper deprived her of that supporting judgment and directing care which the conjugal institution was intended to afford to the softer sex. Though not doubtful of the propriety of her own conduct, she naturally wished it should receive the approbation of an observing eye; and a consciousness of her own abilities was attended with some repugnance to their "wasting their sweetness in the desert air." The friend, the adviser she had long wished for, seemed now to present himself to her view in the person of an accomplished intelligent gentleman of irreproachable worth, who would soon become a near relation. — Every idea of impropriety was removed by this latter consideration; and, with the usual imbecility of short-sighted mortals, she fancied her character might acquire additional lustre by imbibing

bibing the splendor of so fair an archetype.—  
She had not discovered, that

All was false, and hollow; though his tongue  
Dropp'd manna, and could make the worse appear  
The better reason, to perplex and dash  
Maturest councils; for his thoughts were low;  
To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds  
Timorous and slothful; yet he pleas'd the ear.

Her endeavours to divest this “Demon of sentiment” of his cherubic veil were, however, ineffectual. Wrapped in his darling mysticism, he defied her scrutiny. His knowledge of the human heart convinced him how powerful an engine secrecy becomes when wielded by a skillful hand, and opposed to the restless spirit of female curiosity. But while he eluded her inquiries, and avoided a full discovery of his own opinions, he threw out enough to convince her, that they were not only extraordinary but permanent; and by complimenting the sagacious avidity with which she seized every sentiment he seemed unwarily to disclose, he roused the mingled solicitude of inquisitiveness and vanity, and formed an interest which he determined to improve.

The conversation ended on his part with a panegyric on morality, which he loaded with ostentatious ornaments; and a philippic against the illiberality of supposing that exalted minds needed any other inducement to act rightly than the abstract loveliness of virtue. His last observation was prefaced by a solemn avowal of his own respect for religion, which he acknowledged

ledged to be a most useful invention, and a necessary restriction upon the untutored part of mankind. He left Lady Monteith in a sort of maze, regretting that he had not been more explicit on those points in which he had confessed his opinions differed from hers; delighted with his pure morality, and enchanted with his conversation.

Her reverie was interrupted by Lady Arabella's requesting the favour of her opinion, whether tiffany, jessamine, or crape roses, would make the most elegant festoon. She listened with perplexed attention to a recapitulation of the light airiness of the former ornament, and the quiet accommodation of the latter ; and she felt mortified at being obliged to witness the effect of their alternate display on her Ladyship's court dress. While her eyes were fixed upon vacancy, and her thoughts were regretting the wilful negligence, which would give to Fitzosborne a frivolous unintelligent partner, she, with the indifference of Swift's Vanessa, pronounced an unconscious preference of the crape roses. This fiat was decisive, and Lady Arabella returned to her own apartment with her maid and her milliner ; a happy groupe, till the discovery, that a lady whom Lady Arabella hated wore crape roses, drew from the distressed fair one several pathetic ejaculations on the peculiar unhappiness of her own lot, in being thus prevented from having the prettiest trimming in the world. Some tender tears were dropped, which were placed to the account of her aunt ; and after a few expressions, which from a person of less delicacy might be termed scolding, she dismissed her terrified auditors with a declaration,

a declaration, that she was very low, and could not bear contradiction and disappointment.

Meantime Lady Monteith had resumed her studies, and began to discover some of those faults in her beloved Johnson which Fitzosborne had pointed out, when Lord Monteith entered the room, highly elated that he had just made himself complete master of "Britons "strike home," and entreating her to accompany him upon the harp. She complied; but the smile of acquiescence was more of the pensive than of the exhilarating kind; and her thoughts wandered to the prohibited haunts of useless regrets for the past, and vain anticipations of the future. But while, in her career of impossibilities, she was beginning to wish that Monteith possessed the intelligent mind of Fitzosborne, her careless hand struck a false chord, and a mechanical impulse aroused her attention time enough to answer her Lord's inquiries, if she was well, and if any thing made her unhappy. His affectionate solicitude restored her mind to its usual temperament, and she chided herself for indulging a thought inconsistent with the gratitude and esteem which she owed to her plighted consort. She recollects that different excellencies belong to different characters; and that it is the abuse, not the want, of a talent which stamps criminality upon any one. She made allowances for the force of habit conspiring with strong passions, unrestrained by an expensive, yet defective, education, and inflamed by the seductions of affluence and uncontrolled freedom of action.— While these reflections successively occupied her mind,

mind, a tender sweetnes diffused itself over her countenance, and her hand executed " Britons " strike home" entirely to his Lordship's satisfaction.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



